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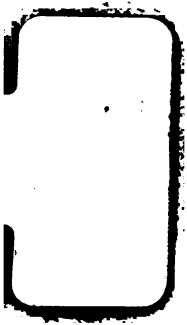

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THE

PLAIN TEACHER,

SHEWING THE ADVANTAGE

OF

MAN'S PRUDENT AND PIOUS CONDUCT,

FROM

ENTERING INTO BUSINESS

TO HIS

LEAVING IT OFF.

CONTAINED UNDER THE HEADS

I. Of the Nature of a Life of Business, and obligations to it.
II. Of choosing a Calling.
III. Of Prudence and Discretion.
IV. Of Diligence.
V. Of Justice.
VI. Of Truth, and of Contentment.
VII. As they relate to Trade.
VIII. Of Religion.
IX. Of Leaving our Callings.

By RICHARD STEELE.

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TO THE READER.

AS *trade* and *commerce* employ a very considerable part of mankind, an attempt to render the conduct of those who are engaged in it more happy and successful, will appear to be, at least, a benevolent undertaking; and to this end it is evident, that *moral* as well as *prudential* directions may contribute. Certainly, to discharge in a proper manner the respective duties of the common callings of life, which take up six parts of our time in *seven*, requires greater attention of mind than is usually paid to them, for the regular discharge of *their respective duties;* and may admit of more assistance than has yet been offered to the world in any treatise now extant. There is, indeed, an excellent piece which has met with considerable and deserved acceptance,

called the *Complete English Tradesman*, which I could wish were in the hands of all that are concerned to appear in that character with honour or success; but as it is chiefly employed in considerations of a *prudential* nature, it leaves room for an attempt of the present kind.

Instead therefore of useless speculations, or perplexing controversies in religion, which neither enrich the mind, nor reform the manners of men; I shall endeavour to direct the conscientious tradesman in the duties of his *daily calling*, wherein he is surrounded with manifold temptations and difficulties, and stands in need of all the assistance he can obtain from GOD or man. He hath the same depraved nature to bias him, and the same malicious spirit to tempt him, as others; and he hath a much greater variety of *trials* and *temptations* from the world, than either the husbandman, scholar, or gentleman. The particular *circumstances* of trade, and the *duties*

flowing from thence, are indeed too numerous to be contained in so small a tract as this; yet I doubt not, but the principles and rules here laid down, being faithfully applied to *particular cases*, will generally be found sufficient for his direction; though after all it must be owned, that the religious fear of GOD, and a sincere love to our neighbour, will do more *to direct us* in many doubtful and critical cases, than can be expected from any treatise whatsoever.

Let me beg that the reader would take into serious and mature consideration the hints that are here suggested, and if he meets with any thing which recommend itself to his *conscience*, as agreeable to the laws of GOD, and the nature and reason of things, that he would not fail immediately to put in *practice*. Surely, no one can be so absurd as to think it sufficient to appear religious on the Lords day, or to be serious in the devotions of the closet, and then leave conscience *asleep* all the in-

termediate time; since these religious duties were designed as the means of producing and maintaining those principles of wisdom and justice, virtue and goodness, which are to be in *continual exercise*; and the infinite Creator and Proprietor of the universe, claims our *constant obedience* to his laws, as well as our devout ascriptions of worship and adoration.

It may be fit to acquaint the world, that the substance of this piece is taken from a book entitled, *The Tradesman's Calling;* which, though it has lain some time in obscurity, is thought by many judicious persons to be very deserving of the public regard. The publisher could have wished it had been revised, and sent into the world by a more able hand; and the sense he had of its deficiency, was the chief cause of its lying so long unpublished: but he does not absolutely despair of its being in some degree useful, since, as a learned writer observes, "Truth influences the mind

of man more by its own authority, evidence and excellency, than by any ornaments of wit and eloquence in which it may be drest." And such ornaments are in this case the less needful, as the subjects are chiefly addressed to persons of plain sense and understanding; if the GOD *of the spirits of all flesh*, is pleased to smile upon it so far as to render it effectual to reform the practices, and improve the tempers of those that read it, the Publisher will have the full reward he hopes for, from this essay of benevolence to his fellow beings; and a thousand encomiums on the elegance of the composition, without these effects would afford him little satisfaction. If ever the blessed GOD is pleased to reform a sinful world, He will honour His *own word* as the instrument of producing such an happy event.

THE

PLAIN TEACHER.

CHAP. I.

THE NATURE OF A LIFE OF BUSINESS, AND OBLIGATIONS TO IT.

THE supreme felicity, and great end of man, is to know, love, and glorify God his Creator, Redeemer and Benefactor. John xvii. 3. But as we are beings endowed with powers and faculties of body and mind, fitted and designed for actions relative to our present state of being; and are placed by Divine Providence in mutual dependence upon each other, by the perpetual return of wants, which of ourselves we are incapable of relieving or supplying; both reason and religion require, that all, as they are able, should be *employed* in such a manner as may be beneficial to *themselves*, and the *society* to which they

relate;* and a very considerable part of the beauty and excellence of the Christian life, consists in due affections and conduct with respect to the persons and things of the *present state*, and in acting upon principles of wisdom, goodness, justice and integrity to one another.

The real and imaginary wants of mankind have created great *diversity* in their employments. Some are chiefly labouring to support the life, or restore the health of the body. Others to defend men's persons or estates, and secure or promote the private or public peace and prosperity. Some to improve the mind in useful and entertaining knowledge: or, in the more important concerns of religion and virtue, which, though not always the most advantageous, yet are certainly not the least noble employments. While others, in vast variety, are contributing to the convenience and delight of their brethren of mankind.

* Heaven formed each on other to depend,
As master, or as servant, or as friend;
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all;
And builds on wants, and on defects of mind,
The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind.

And, surely, the wisdom and goodness of God deserve our reflection here in *fitting* and *disposing* men to those various services, which are suited to the *necessities* and *comforts* of human life; each conducing to the public good; and qualified for discharging the respective offices in which they are engaged. The rich ought to remember that their *comforts* as much depend on the service of the poor, as the *support* of the poor does on their affluence or bounty; so that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you;" 1 Cor. xii. 21. this should induce them to treat the poor with *tenderness*, and reward them with *liberality*.

That every one who is capable of it, should be *constantly employed* in some useful station of life, appears a truth so evident that little need be said to support it. Few indeed are so worthless as to be *always* idle, but that we busy ourselves only *now* and *then*, as humour and fancy incline us, can never be sufficient to answer the end of our creation; for this it is necessary we should exert ourselves in some business that may *fully employ our time*; and that it should be *our own proper* business; for divine wisdom censures those as *disor-*

derly livers, 2 Thess. iii. 11. who either *work not at* all, or are *busybodies*, trifling intermeddlers in the affairs of others, to the neglect of their own; and requires that they study to be quiet, and to do their own business." 1 Thess. iv. 11. The wise Governor of the universe has appointed to every one his *proper place* and *work*, and will rather reprove than reward those who are acting out of their own sphere. But as *pride* and *sloth* have many pleas, I shall endeavour to enforce the obligations to a life of useful activity, by observing,

1st. That the *nature* and *reason of things* require it. There are comparatively few whose circumstances are independent. Now it is highly unreasonable to live upon others without a mutual return of advantage. And to expect that sustenance should drop from the clouds, without labour and care of our own, is an absurdity so obvious and flagrant, that none are stupid enough to maintain it; yet their conduct is not much wiser, who pretend to live upon *providence* while they live in *sloth*, and do not exert themselves in some proper business for their own support. But let a person's circumstances be what they will, the God of nature, who doeth nothing in vain, by having given us capacities and powers

for action, plainly intimates, that it is our duty to *employ them* in a rational and useful manner. Indeed, *activity* is so natural and delightful to man, that if idleness had the sanction of a law to enforce it, no doubt many would willingly pay their fine for liberty to work.

2d. It is the *express command* and *appointment of* GOD. *Adam*, before and after his fall, was placed in a state of action. In innocency, the wisdom of GOD chose a calling for him: "The Lord GOD took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it." Gen. ii. 15. "If a noble birth, as one observes, a great estate, a small family, and a mind fitted for contemplation, would excuse man from labour: none have so fair a plea for it as he." After the fall when labour was more difficult to him and less profitable, he was enjoined, in the sweat of his face to eat his bread, until he should return unto his dust." Gen. iii. 19. The command of Almighty GOD to all his posterity is, that "six days they should labour, and do all their work:" Exod. xx. 9. In this is plainly implied, that all should fill up their time with some proper employment, from one season of religious rest to another. For it is obvious to remark, that

the obligation to labour *six* days, is expressed in as general terms, and is bound upon us by the same authority, as the religious observation of the *seventh*. Nor is the case changed under the gospel, by which men are commanded and exhorted, in the "name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, with quietness to work, and to eat their own bread." 2 Thess. iii. 12. That his precepts might have greater force, he has given us his *own example;* for before his entrance into the ministerial office, we find him labouring in the carpenter's trade: Mark vi. 3. And if so divine a person stooped to a mean calling to teach us humility, diligence and industry, shall any who call him their master, refuse to *imitate* him herein?

3d. *Justice to our families* and the *public* require it. The great author of our natures, has implanted in every being, love and affection to their tender offspring, which excites them to study and promote their happiness; but idleness and sloth obstruct those blessings by which the family might live comfortably, and be disposed of happily. And whatever profession of religion there may be, the sacred records warrant us to say, that "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith,

and is worse than an infidel." 1 Tim. v. 8. How unnatural is the sight, when by the slothfulness of the parent, the children are clothed with rags? Or how can they rise up and call them blessed, who thus make them heirs to nothing but poverty and distress?

Nor is the regard we owe to the *public* to be overlooked. None should stand as *cyphers* in their generations, but so employ themselves as to be *blessings* in it, that their absence may be sensibly felt. How many are employed to furnish us with the conveniences and necessaries of life: and how unreasonable is it to make *no returns?* The industrious bees drive the useless drones from their little commonwealth; and indeed those deserve not the protection, that add not to the welfare of the public.

On these principles, and from a conviction that *idleness* was injurious to the constitutions and morals of men, and very unjust and miachievious to society, the ancient Greeks and Romans appointed magistrates to see that no persons spent their time in sloth; and severely punished those that thus offended. It was the general custom of the Jews to bring up their children to manual labour, how plentiful so-

ever their circumstances were, or how polite soever their education was designed to be. On this account we find the apostle Paul, who had a learned education, under the greatest of their Rabbi's, working as a tent maker. The same custom is continued in other nations to this day.

4th. Our *own safety* and *comfort* much depend upon it. The busy person like the bird upon the wing, escapes many of those snares to which the indolent are exposed. It is hardly possible that a person should continue absolutely unemployed for any long time; and he that is not doing what he ought, will be doing what he ought not; the destroyer of souls can hardly wish for a fairer mark at which to direct his temptations, than an idle person. The *sloth* of *Sodom* is represented as one cause of the *wickedness* of it; Ezek. xvi. 49. and *David's* criminal indulgence seems to have been preceded by the same indisposition: 2 Sam. xi. 2. But an honest diligence subdues that pride, lust, and sensuality, which are cherished by sloth and indolence. What numbers have been cut off in the midst of life, or had their beings rendered uncomfortable while they lived, by the great variety of diseases which *sloth* and *inactivity* bring upon the human frame;

as dropsies, consumptions, melancholy, and the like, which, according to all human views, might have been prevented by useful activity? The difference of sloth and industry in the acquisition and enjoyment of the good things of life, is too evident to need my illustration here. From hence we may take occasion to reflect,

1. That an *indolent* life is *blameable*, whatever excuses may be made for it.

It is certainly wrong, that persons *in affluent circumstances in life*, should think themselves excused from *activity* and *employment*. Superior advantages in life are chiefly valuable as they give an opportunity of serving GOD, and doing good in a more extensive way: but their design is *perverted*, when they are made a plea for sloth and luxury. If your *own* condition does not require the improvement of your fortune, the wants of *others* do, and the welfare of your *soul* may render an employment highly expedient. A thousand vices are produced by idleness. The human mind without exercise, like standing water, soon grows corrupt; and a life spent in the cheerful service of GOD, and usefulness to mankind, will doubtless yield a *more pleasant reflection* in the decline of years, or

the prospect of death, than time trifled away in inactivity and doing nothing.

It is not a sufficient excuse for slothfulness that any have been hitherto *unsuccessful* in business. Let such exert themselves with vigour, and consider their disappointment as a motive to greater diligence and prudence, rather than a reason for *indolent despondency*. One attempt may succeed, though others have been fruitless. Instead, therefore, of *sitting down discouraged*, let persons in this case use care and diligence to *find out the cause* of their unsuccessfulness, and endeavour to correct it; whether it be imprudence, indolence, unskilfulness, credulity or vice: and having done this, let them endeavour to introduce themselves again into business, with greater caution, with more steady resolution and diligence, and with a humble dependence on GOD, the giver of wisdom, and fountain of happiness.

If *inability* is pleaded, take care it be *real* and *not imaginary*. There is no person to whom GOD has given the exercise of reason, but may employ himself in *some way* or *other*; and an industrious mind will break through many difficulties, rather than *stand as a cypher* in the world. Indeed if we are wholly disabled by infirmities, GOD

himself gives a release from labour. Patience and submission to his will, are the proper duties of that state; which, however it may and should be borne with patience, will always be considered as *an affliction* by an active mind. It is to be feared, the cause of persons loitering away their lives very frequently is, that their purses are *too low* for high and honourable employments, and their spirits *too high* for those that are mean: they would live without labour, and enjoy plenty without pains: and their *unwillingness* to action, and not their *inability*, is the true cause of an indolent life.

2. Let *parents* be persuaded to educate their children for a life of *business* and *usefulness*; let not such noble powers and faculties produce such *worthless* lives, as are a reproach to human nature; for if you are *rich*, the wealth you give them without an employment will only be *fuel* for their lusts: and make their present folly the more *conspicuous*, and their eternal ruin the more *inevitable*. If you are *poor*, the injury you do to your children is almost irreparable; you direct them in the way to *shame* and *misery*, and betray the trust which God has *committed* to you; whereas, by placing them in some honest calling,

they might be happy in themselves, useful in the world, and respected by all about them.

Let the *young* be excited by these considerations to apply with spirit and resolution to acquire useful knowledge, that they may be fit for those employments by which they may be a credit to their friends, and be serviceable to mankind. Though wisdom and knowledge be difficult to attain, and ease and pastime have a more enticing view at present; yet the fruits of *industry* in riper years, will abundantly recompense your present labour and self-denial. Folly and want are easy acquisitions, but wisdom and wealth are only to be procured under the blessing of heaven, by industry and care.

What egregious folly it is to neglect *religion*, the great business and end of life; and that in which the safety and happiness of our immortal souls is so intimately concerned? If *diligence* in common affairs is so important, if *negligence* there is so culpable, they are infinitely more so here.—That the *soul* should be adorned with the moral image of GOD; that its beauty in this respect should grow; that by a sincere faith in Christ, and an humble repentance towards GOD, we should be made meet

for final and everlasting glory; and the lively expectation thereof should grow into the full assurance of hope. These are objects that will repay the most assiduous application, the greatest diligence. This is a case so plain that children, and almost idiots, might seem capable of judging in it. In such a cause, we might expect to find *ardour* and *perseverance* even in the most sluggish minds, in those which no prospect of earthly honour or wealth can warm.

But how preposterous is it! These infinite concerns are *overlooked*, this important, necessary business is *neglected*, not by the ignorant, the indolent and sluggish alone; but by the prudent and shrewd; by men of business, steadiness, and unwearied application. There are those that *rise up early*, and *lie down late*, that *eat the bread of labour and carefulness* for a little, it may be a very little, *temporary gain*, who will not find a moment to think of GOD and their souls, though reason, conscience, and the word of GOD, assure them that the neglect must prove destructive of their eternal *happiness*. O ye prudent and toiling mortals! Are the unsatisfying, transient enjoyments and honours of this life worth *so much;* and

is it of *no importance* that, when these things fail, you may be received to everlasting habitations! Consider your ways and be wise. O may GOD teach us all to know the things that differ, and prefer those that are most excellent, and by the powerful energy of his grace make us wise and happy for ever!

CHAP. II.

OF CHOOSING A CALLING.

HAVING considered the *obligations* to a life of business, and *advantages* of it; the next thing that presents itself to us is, the *proper choice* of it. This, at first view, must appear to every one a *momentous* concern, as so much of the comfort and happiness of an after life depends upon it. As to children and youth, it is commonly under the direction of parents or guardians; but the inclination of the person to be disposed of is not to be disregarded. The directions necessary under this head may be comprised in these two, that the calling we choose be *lawful* and *suitable*.

1. Both the disposers and disposed must agree to choose a calling that is *lawful*.—To do a sinful *act* is bad enough, but to make a *trade* of sin, and to employ our lives in one continued scene of disobedience to GOD, is a condition that cannot be thought of without the utmost abhorrence, by any one, in whom the principles of virtue and religion are not wholly extinguished; as the *continual* curse of GOD must necessarily be attendant upon them. The prospect of gain may blind the eyes of men, and carry them on in such a course without reflecting; but it is often seen that divine judgment follows them, even in this life, by *blasting* their hopes and aims, and causing wealth thus gotten by vanity to be *diminished*; Prov. xiii. 11. ch. xxi. 6. ch. xxii. 8. but should this not be the case, GOD does not forget, nor lose the right to punish, those crimes, on which he does not animadvert in this world. It is a plain, though a lamentable case, that men are now disposed to take great liberties with their consciences, and make a light matter of religion, as if it was confined to a few outward acts of piety, without having any thing to do with their general conduct: in such an age it would be difficult to point out those callings that

come under the character of *criminal*, without censure: yet every one must acknowledge that those employments are certainly *evil*, that tend to *lessen* the reverence and duty we owe to Almighty GOD; or *obstruct* the general good of mankind; that are either the *necessary occasions* of sin to ourselves, or the *certain incentives* to it in others. Those only are *lawful* in which we can reasonably ask for the blessing of GOD, and expect his *favour* and *acceptance*. This indeed is the best rule we can form to ourselves by which to judge of every doubtful action.

2. The employment or calling we choose, must be *suitable* or *fit*. Rashness and negligence herein, has often been the ruin of particular persons, and sometimes a public mischief. Those who have capacities and endowments *above* their callings, grow uneasy and discontented in them. Those who have employments above their capacities, after some weak and unsuccessful attempts, are discouraged; and if they are placed in more exalted stations of life, render their weakness the more conspicuous, and prove a shame and reproach unto them.

Let therefore, the *abilities* of body and mind, be considered. As to the *mind;*

never thrust one of a dull capacity, bad memory, shallow judgment, or ungovernable passions, into an ingenious profession; we must do what we *ought;* that is, fit the means to the end, and for an ingenious calling, choose an ingenious person. On the other hand, it is great pity to confine a bright genius to a sordid employment. This is like thrusting those to the oar, that might sit at the helm. GOD, by giving to some excellent and large capacities, tacitly appoints them to employments suited thereto, if other circumstances concur. The employment should likewise be fitted to the strength of *body.* A robust and healthy constitution, where the endowments of the mind are small, is fittest for a laborious calling: and those of weaker, and more tender constitutions, should be placed in easier stations of life.

Let the *education* and *circumstances* be regarded. A genteel or liberal *education,* directs to a genteel or liberal calling, if other things concur. A plain employment, very well suits a plain education: but it will require uncommon wisdom and humility, for persons of learning and ingenuity, to stoop to low and servile employments, and be easy in them. The *circumstances* of persons are also to be considered in the

choice of a calling. It is absurd to set those to follow a plough, who by the fortune they are to receive, might be qualified to fill the chair. But it is to be feared people more frequently err on the other side. Vanity and pride lead persons to choose for themselves, or those they are concerned for, callings superior to their substance, in hopes of some imaginary, fortuitous events, which seldom come to pass; upon this presumption they either enter into business upon a false foundation, and so *sink into ruin* at any considerable disappointment; or else for want of a capital to engage in trade, they are obliged to remain in a state of *servitude* and *dependence* all their days.

In order to a happy choice, therefore,

1st. Let due *consideration* be used. It is highly absurd to fix upon such a weighty affair as a condition for life, without the serious exercise of *reason* and *thought;* and yet we too often find that humour and fancy are the guides that are chiefly consulted in this momentous concern. Persons promising themselves ease or honour, pleasure or gain in this or the other employment, rush into it, and their promises exceeding the bound of reasonable expectation, and disappointing their hopes, they

grow restless and weary of their choice. Consider then, is the calling I am about to choose *lawful* in itself, and *suitable* for me? have I means proportioned to the end, capacity sufficient to attain the knowledge of it; strength and patience to bear its burdens; and substance to support the expenses? Otherwise, like the *foolish builder*, after you have laid the foundation, you will not be *able to finish*, and thereby expose yourself to sorrow and shame. If you are fitted for callings of different excellence, it is our wisdom and duty to choose that in which we may *most eminently* serve GOD, and the community.

2d. Let faithful, *judicious* persons be consulted, especially of the *same* calling. They are the fittest judges in their own profession, as they best know the conveniences and inconveniences, attending it, and the qualifications requisite for it: great regard therefore should be had to their advice, supposing them judicious and faithful. Let the young be persuaded to *submit their judgments* to persons of experience and fidelity, and steer their course by their advice. Then, should they be unsuccessful, this reflection will yield them support, "that they were not ruined by their own rashness?" and they will find

persons ready to assist a man of *conduct* and *prudence* in his distress, who would despise the man of *humour* and *caprice*.

3d. Choose such a calling and place as may not be *dangerous to the mind*. There are some *callings*, which are in themselves lawful, and sufficiently gainful, in which, nevertheless, as they are at present managed, none who regard the precious and immortal *soul*, would fix their children; because the *temptations* which attend them are so many and great, that it is next to impossible to be preserved from the contagion of vice and immorality in them.—There are *places* also, which on account of business would be deservedly preferred, and yet by the supineness and neglect of masters in the government of their families, and the infection of evil servants, who are the bane of youth, they are rendered equally destructive. Deal not worse by your children, than you would by the herd of the stall, or the sheep of the fold. Expose not their immortal souls to such eminent hazard for any momentary gain; for "what will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Matt. xvi. 26. Let them be situated where GOD is reverently worshipped,

and his day religiously observed; where the weakness and impetuosity of youthful dispositions, may be under a *wholesome restraint*, and they may be taught to live for time and eternity. For, permit me to say, that if their lives and manners are not regulated by reason and religion, they will be as far from happines in *this* world, as they are from the warrantable hopes of a *better*.

4th. Let the *divine providence* be acknowledged, by *earnest supplications* for direction and assistance. It is GOD that appointeth the *bounds* and places of our *habitation*, that by a sense of our dependence upon him, we might be induced to *seek after* him, Acts xvii. 26. It is part of the reasonable homage which intelligent and dependent creatures owe to the supreme Creator and Governor of all, to acknowledge him in all their ways; in doing this we are allowed to hope that he will *direct our paths;* Prov. iii. 6. but in the neglect of it, as we have no right to expect the guidance or blessing of heaven, so it will be no wonder if we meet with disappointment and distress. GOD only knows all the temptations and difficulties, advantages and disadvantages of the several situations in life, and *our* strength and fitness to

bear them. He has often directed the honest humble enquirer, sometimes by persons and means unknown and unthought of, into the way most conducive to his present comfort and future happiness. It is our best interest, as well as our proper duty to leave him to "choose our inheritance for us." Psal. xlvii. 4.

5th. In concurrence with the foregoing directions, let the person's *inclination* be consulted; which if it is strongly and reasonably fixed on any particular calling, is one method whereby we receive the direction of providence, and a good step to a proper choice. Persons generally make the best proficiency in, and most easily bear the inconveniences of those employments and situations, to which their natural dispositions incline them.

"I would *seek unto* GOD, and unto GOD would I *commit my cause*, Job v. 8.

Proper *dispositions* and *views*, are equally necessary with a suitable choice of an employment. As we are beings possessed of reason, and directed in the exercise of it by a revelation from GOD; it concerns us that the *views* and *motives* of all our actions, and the *disposition* and *manner* in which they are conducted, be agreeable to the directions heaven has given to lead us

in the paths of duty and happiness, and worthy of the reasonable natures with which we are endowed. Now to this end it is especially necessary that the mind be influenced and directed by the principles of *religion.* We may justly impute the miscarriage of thousands, to their unadvised and irreligious introduction into life; they go to universities and trades, without any sense of duty or danger, and being unarmed, are soon surprised by those temptations with which an evil world is filled, and which a depraved nature is too ready to embrace, to their utter ruin and destruction. To prevent this, labour after a *true understanding* of the christian religion, and regulate your *tempers* and *conduct* by it in every scene of life.

1. Let a sincere *love* and *reverence* of GOD, and desire of his *acceptance* and *favour* through Christ Jesus, be the governing spring and motive of all your actions. When the mind is *devoted to* GOD, and *bent on pleasing* him, we have the strongest security against present guilt and folly, and future misery and punishment. If we sincerely serve him, he will surely bless us; he will interest himself in our concerns, support us under our difficulties, give us the direction of his wisdom, and

the consolations of his grace, and preserve us from a thousand follies and miseries, by which those are overtaken, who make *wordly gain*, or their *own lusts* and *vicious appetites*, the governing principles of their lives. It is as much your interest as your duty, to be early and truly religious, and to "remember your Creator in your youth." Eccles. xii. 1. It is this for which you were *created* and *redeemed*, and are *supported* and *maintained* in life; and which the majesty of heaven claims of you as his *due*. Let the business of your callings be prosecuted, "not with eyeservice, as pleasing men *only*, but as the servants of Christ, with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not to men." Ephes. vi. 6, 7. This will ennoble the meanest employment, and secure your highest end and truest happiness, whatever your success may be in other respects.*

* Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee:

A servant with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

HERBERT.

2. In dependence upon the help of GOD, let your religious principles be accompanied with *steady resolutions*. Temptations and difficulties unknown before, attend *every new scene* of life, which soon overcome the unprepared and irresolute mind: but if you discern the hook as well as the bait, and consider the consequences as well as the incentives to evil, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you may escape. Of all temptations to which the young are exposed, none is more fatal and pernicious than *evil company*. Such are to be found every where, who, like the fallen angels, having *revolted* from their allegiance to GOD, endeavour to *draw others* into the same guilt and condemnation with themselves. Begin, therefore, no friendship with any, until you have a *worthy* character of them from a *judicious* hand, or have had a sufficient time and opportunity to be satisfied of their seriousness, from your own observation. Let not *former* acquaintance only be thought a sufficient foundation for *after* friendship; for he might be very innocent at school, who is now very vicious and prophane. Let no accomplishments of wit or learning, breeding or fortune, engage your heart to an intimacy with any who *despise* or *ridicule* a

life of serious religion and strict virtue; for the more agreeable they are in other respects, so much the more fatal is their converse likely to be. Herein you must be *resolute;* two or three positive denials will free you from their solicitations, whereas easiness and compliance will strengthen their importunity, and when once you are entangled in the snare of evil company, you will find it very difficult to disengage yourself. If you are sometimes forced, on account of business or relation to converse with persons of this character, let it ever be with a *prudent reservedness;* and if you at any time perceive your mind begin to fluctuate, and your zeal for religion abate by the sneers of folly and profaneness, seriously inspect the word of GOD, and see what infinite wisdom dictates as the duty and happiness of man, and consider which it is best to follow, the judgment of GOD, or that of blind and deluded sinners. Consider whether in the prospect of *death* and at the day of *judgment*, they will not curse themselves and their own folly, for the neglect of that religion which they now impiously and madly deride; and then think whether he does not deserve to perish, who will *forsake* his GOD, his duty, and his best in-

terest, for the sneers of such madmen; inquire therefore after the prudent, the wise, and religious of your age, and converse with them; *for he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* Prov. xiii. 20.

Maintain also a *resolute* industry under the *labours* and *difficulties* of your callings. Time and use will make that easy and tolerable, which at first appears difficult and burdensome. The powers of the body and mind *enlarge* and *strengthen* by practice, and with ease and pleasure perform those things, which once were thought most grievous. Having therefore a tolerable capacity for your business, resolve to apply to it with *firmness of mind.* Nor be discouraged if you meet with some *severities*, to which you have not been accustomed; as stern and angry looks, harsh words or unkind usage; patiently and cheerfully *submit* to what is sufferable in your calling, and still *hope* that peace and satisfaction will succeed toil and trouble.

3. Particularly let me recommend to you *humility* and *faithfulness*, as most necessary to procure esteem from those you serve, and respect from all mankind.

Humility will make you *easy* and *contented* in every condition of life; you will

then be ready to be commanded; easy to be pleased; hard to be provoked; and generally beloved. An humble mind thinks every good it receives *more* than it deserves, and every evil *less*. It will not think itself too great or too good to stoop to the *meanest services* of an honest employment; nor be wanting in a *modest* and *respectful behaviour* to others. You will not then be *disputing* when you should obey; *fretting* when you should submit; *envying* those you should respect, or *contemning* those you should embrace. These are the consequences of pride of heart; a disposition which will make you hateful to GOD, disrespected of men, and uneasy to yourselves, every labour will be thought too much, every reproof too galling, and every week a year, until the time of servitude expires, and then you will carry your *chain* with you, for what liberty can he have that is a *slave* to his pride and passions?

Fidelity is another amiable disposition, which should be ever cultivated. Be true and sincere in your *words*. Let lying and dissimulation be shunned with the greatest abhorrence, as a vice that is destructive to all friendship and converse among men, by taking away that mutual confidence which is the very bond of society; and is

the sure characteristic of a mean and abandoned mind, wherever it is indulged. Rev. xxi. 8, 27. Chap. xxii. 15. Prov. xx. 9. Let this therefore be your resolution at all times, and in all cases, to *speak the truth* whatever it costs you.

> Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie;
> The fault that needs it most, grows two thereby.
> HERBERT.

You will find a fault *honestly confessed* will be attended with a much readier pardon, and preserve a much better character, than when excused or denied with *a lie*, which at best will hide it *but for a moment*. Prov. xii. 19. Let your *Fidelity* extend to *deeds* as well as words. Be punctually faithful and just in every thing you are entrusted with. Diminish not the *substance*, divulge not the *secrets* of those you serve, upon any pretence whatsoever. Then, though your skill and parts may fall short of expectation, your *faithfulness* will procure to you love and esteem. Whatever, therefore, your necessities or temptations may be, never transgress the rules of *justice* and *truth*, nor imagine that any degree of skill or dexterity will recommend you in the world without them.

4. Let the *study* of the *sacred scriptures* constantly employ some part of your leisure hours. These are the surest guides to duty and happiness. The mind of the blessed GOD is herein laid open to man, to preserve him from the worst of evils, and to direct him to the highest good, and shew him the thoughts of his heart towards him for ever. Here we are presented with a system of the most refined morality, founded upon the most rational and exalted conceptions of GOD; and enforced by the most awful and interesting sanctions. They are admirably contrived (with GOD's blessing) to heal the conscience; to purify, to comfort, to ennoble the soul; to inspire it with principles of virtue and goodness, and strengthen and confirm it in the practice of it. In a word, they are able to make us *wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* 2 Tim. iii. 15. Loose and immoral writings which swarm in the present day, however celebrated for wit and politeness, tend to poison the heart, corrupt the fancy, vitiate the affections; and for one useful lesson that can be learned from them, are big with a thousand ills.

5. Let humble, earnest *prayer to* GOD for his grace and favour, be as the constant breath of your souls. This is not only ne-

cessary at the entrance into business, but in all *successive* seasons of life; because we constantly depend on GOD for the continuance of present blessings, as well as those we hope for in futurity. *Morning* and *evening prayer*, are as the key to open the mercies of the day, and shut out the dangers of the night, and therefore be constant and sincere in the practice of it.

Thus having chosen a *lawful* calling in a *religious* family, having your minds influenced by the *principles* of religion, and your resolutions *steady* (through divine grace) for the practice of it, making the *holy scriptures* your study and guide, and seeking the blessing of heaven by *serious prayer* to God; you may comfortably enter upon, and vigorously pursue the duties of your callings. Some assistance for the regular and religious discharge of which, is the design of the following essays.

"O that there were such an heart in them that they would *fear me*, and keep all *my commandments* always, that it might be well with them. Ye shall observe to do as the Lord your GOD hath commanded you. You shall not *turn aside* to the right hand, or to the left. You shall walk in *all the ways* which the Lord your GOD hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it

may be *well with you*, and that ye may prolong your days, *Deut.* v. 29, 33.

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, and *serve him* in sincerity and truth. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve. And the people answered and said, GOD forbid that we should *forsake* the Lord, *Joshua* xxiv. 14, 16.

"What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy *tongue* from evil, and thy *lips* from speaking guile. Depart from *evil*, and do *good;* seek peace and pursue it. *Psalm* xxxiv. 12, 14.

"My son, if sinners entice thee, *consent thou not.* Walk not thou in the way *with them*, refrain thy foot from their path, &c. *Prov.* i. 10, 15.

"My son, forget not my law; but let *thine heart* keep my commandments. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; write them upon the table of thine heart. So shalt thou find *favour* and *good understanding* in the sight of GOD and man, *Prov.* iii. 1—4.

"Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore *get wisdom;* and with all thy getting, *get understanding.* Exalt her, and she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee

to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace. A crown of glory shall she deliver to thee. Take fast hold of *instruction*, let her not go; keep her for she is thy life. Enter not into the path of the *wicked*, and go not into the way of *evil men*. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. *Ponder* the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be *established*, &c. *Prov.* iv. 7—27.

And thou, Solomon, *my son*, know thou the GOD of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou *seek him*, he will be found of thee; but if thou *forsake him*, he will cast thee off for ever, 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9.

"Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the *grace of* GOD, we have had our conversation in the world, 2 *Cor.* i. 2.

"Flee also *youthful* lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, 2 *Tim.* ii. 22.

"Young men likewise exhort to be *sober minded*," *Tit.* ii. 6.

CHAP. III.

OF PRUDENCE OR DISCRETION.

THE first thing necessary for a happy progress in business, is *prudence* or *discretion*. This, as it relates to trade, is a habit of mind enabling us to conduct our affairs in the wisest and best manner; or in other words, it is pursuing the *proper* end, by the *best* means, and in the *fittest* time. It is not that *serpentine craft*, which lies in wait to captivate the unwary, impose upon the credulous, and overreach the weak understanding, and which teaches men to increase their wealth by injustice and fraud. God has given to no man superior wisdom or skill, to be directed to ends so contrary to his own nature and will, and the general good of mankind. But it is that *honest wisdom*, which is consistent with a good conscience, and an ornament to it. Whatever *good* arises from deliberate advice, sagacious foresight, stable resolution, and orderly conduct; wisdom confers. Whatever *evils* proceed from blind ignorance, false presumption, unwary credulity, precipitate rashness, and

unsteady purposes; wisdom prevents. GOD having given to man a *considering mind*, sagacity and foresight, which he has denied to other creatures. They who act foolishly so far degrade the man, and resemble the brute: And many are ruined by their own *indiscretion* and *folly*, without any other visible means than that they were themselves rash, wilful or weak. But when our intentions are good, and the means proper, we may hope that all-wise goodness will prosper us, and our success will then be doubly pleasant: Or, if we are disappointed, we shall disarm the affliction of what makes the deepest wound, the reflection that it was procured by our own folly. It is not supposed, that our *wisdom* and *prudence* can controul the events of divine providence, or make our dependence upon the blessed GOD unnecessary. But it will hinder us from being our own destroyers, and is the *means* which the great Governor of the world uses to bestow prosperity and happiness, where he is disposed to vouchsafe the enjoyment of them.

Having considered the *nature* and *advantages* of prudence and discretion; we come now to instance the *particulars*

wherein the Tradesman is called to the exercise of it, namely,

1. *In getting a full insight into his calling;* so as to know all the parts, and lawful arts and methods of it. The nature and quality of the commodities he deals in; proper times and places for buying and vending of them; the quantities of each that are most likely to produce advantage; and the best method and art of manufacturing goods; these, and every other part, should be well studied and fully understood. Leave it to others to pride themselves in the knowledge of callings foreign to their own; or to be curiously prying into the conduct and concerns of others; and remember that "the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his *own* way." Your trade or calling is your proper province, for the improvement of which your mind and capacities should be employed; and neither GOD nor man will condemn you for inexperience in the business of others. Let the time of your *apprenticeship* be carefully improved to this end. Treasure up all the *knowledge* you can attain by observation and instruction, and never be ashamed to continue learning any honest skill; for no fortune or application will support a man who is remarkably

defective in knowledge. Your success is likely to be that of a rich vessel guided by an unskilful pilot, in danger soon to be shipwrecked and lost. On the other hand, all *masters* should make conscience, honestly and faithfully to *instruct* their apprentices in all the lawful and gainful mysteries of their callings. This they are bound to do by their own agreement, and by all the rules of justice and honour.

2d. *In the prudent choice* of the several *circumstances of trade.*

For *Time.* Choose that which is most suitable for your business; "for to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose." And among the rest, "a time to buy, *and* a time to sell, Eccles. iii. 1. which every wise Tradesman will observe. The future contingencies of business, and the rise and fall of the value of commodities, often depend upon such uncertain or unknown causes, that the deepest penetration is not able to fathom; but to buy goods when they are cheap, and sell them when they are growing dear: and at all times to be cautious of *overcharging* yourselves with dear or changeable goods, are maxims of prudence that never vary. Futurity is hid from us, but *discretion* is given to direct

us, and those of the best discernment and sagacity are most likely to be successful.

For *Place.* Prudence will direct the Tradesman to consider which is most *suitable* and proper for his calling, and fix there. The conveniences of his family must give way to the conveniences of his business, and his fancy be regulated by his judgment in this affair. That place may be exceedingly proper and advantageous for one employment, which persons of a different one must starve in; and a fine house, or a pleasant situation, or even a small rent, will not make amends for the want of customers.

For *Persons.* Great prudence is necessary in the choice of these. First, *Whom to trust:* for it is not the metal that glitters most, that is always the richest; men are often deceitful, and too many make it their business to deceive, and enrich themselves with the spoils of the unwary and credulous. It is better, therefore, to be at the pains of a diligent enquiry after their abilities for the trust which we repose in them; than endure the grief of sad experience that we were mistaken in our apprehensions concerning them. Certain it is, that as there is prudence in trusting some, and charity in trusting others; so

there are many whom it is neither prudence nor charity to trust at all. *Whom to deal with;* to wit, with men of conscience, or at least of common honesty; for these may be relied upon with more security than others, and it is at all times more creditable to correspond with men of virtue than with knaves. Common fame will generally acquaint you who and where they are. Lastly, *Whom to be familiar with.* For though we should be friendly to all, yet familiar only with a few; and they should be such as we may either receive good from, or do good unto. Let therefore the wise and prudent, the virtuous and good, be the persons of your intimacy and choice; for nothing has a greater influence on our present and future happiness or misery, than our *chosen* companions, as was before observed. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Prov. xiii. 20.

3d. This *prudence* should appear in using *mature deliberation* in affairs of importance. It is too visible that even men of ingenuity are often ruined by their *rashness.* Not considering the circumstances that are necessary to direct them in a proper conduct, nor viewing the consequences

that flow from them, they are carried on by a plausible appearance of things or a hasty impetuosity of spirit, to the irretrievable ruin of themselves and families; fancy or passion, not reason and judgment, being the guides of their actions. Others lose their opportunities of advantage by an unsettled, *dilatory* temper of mind, suspending their determinations, till the proper season of acting is past. Due *deliberation* is therefore recommended, according to the importance and difficulty of the affair, and the limits of time it will admit of. If the case will allow of it, take a night's time to think of it, for that which is weighed over night, and reviewed in the morning, will be in some degree ripe for a judicious resolution. Indeed, as to trifling concerns, it is childish and unnecessary to spend much time in determining concerning them; but of the two, a circumspect slowness in words and actions, is preferable to too much speed, as being less dangerous and hurtful.

4th. In *proportioning* the affairs of your trade *to your abilities.*

Of *Mind.* So as not to overcharge your *understanding* or *memory.* The mind of man, like a spring overstretched, loses its vigour. A ship that is well built, rigged

and balanced, will carry a heavy burden; but if overladen it sinks. And, therefore, when you are so far overburdened with business, as to unfit you for the service of GOD, and the enjoyment of yourselves; when you can neither eat, nor sleep, nor be cheerful, nor pray, it is time to abate, and draw your business into less compass.

Of *Body*. That you undertake no more, than the *strength* of that is able to perform; for this usually proceeds from covetousness, which is grasping at every thing; it makes men slaves in their callings; and either injures those that employ them by disappointments, or themselves by too much labour; thereby disturbing the peace of their minds, and impairing their health and strength. But let such remember that GOD and an eternal world call for some proportion of time and vigour of spirits; and that our bodies were designed to be "the temples of the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. iii. 16. and not drudges and slaves to the world. And as divine providence seldom makes it necessary for any thus to *labour in the very fire*, so he can cause it to be *for very vanity*, to those whose avarice prompts them thereto.

Of *Estate*. That you launch out no further than you can feel ground under

you. For though in some cases, where the gain is certain or extremely probable, it may be lawful and prudent for persons to *enlarge* their stock and trade beyond the limits of their own foundation; yet every wise man will be *very cautious* in this matter; and I do not see how an honest man can answer it to GOD and his own conscience to go far this way, without acquainting his creditors beforehand with the nature of his adventures, and gaining their consent; for unexpected losses and disappointments may happen; and what right have you to endanger the ruin of others, or at least their sustaining a considerable damage without their *own consent?* Pride or covetousness, are usually the motives to these hazardous enterprises, and should be watched against by every *prudent* Tradesman; for as that water will turn one mill briskly round, which will cause two to go heavily; so that credit with which a person may cheerfully carry on a moderate trade, will fill the mind with confusion and anxiety, when it is extended to a greater degree. The story often ends sadly, and he that was not contented to trade with *his own* stock, must be glad to live upon *another's* charity.

5th. In *regulating your expences* by your *abilities.* As men should not on the one hand, from a sordid disposition, live too much *below* their incomes, and deprive themselves and families of what may contribute to the comforts of life; so, on the other, great caution should be used that their expenses *do not exceed* their due proportion. "Expensive living is a kind of slow fever that preys upon the spirits and vitals of the Tradesman, and when it is considerably increased is as fatal, and as sure to kill: it feeds upon the two most essential branches of his trade, his *credit* and his *cash*; whereby the languishing Tradesman is overwhelmed."

6th. *Prudence* will direct the Tradesman to a *frequent inspection into the state* of his affairs; that he may know whether, and how much he thrives or languishes therein. This is especially necessary with respect to your *souls*; and he must live very uncomfortably, or be a very bankrupt in religion who neglects it. But it is of use also in *temporal* concerns; and to this end a *regular method* should be kept in your books of account, that you may readily and certainly view the posture of your affairs. If you find that you *improve* in your way, this will afford you satisfac-

tion and pleasure, and should excite your gratitude to GOD for his goodness, in blessing your labours. If you perceive things to be *at a stand*, you will be quickened to greater frugality and industry before it is too late. And if you are *declining* in your estate, it will oblige you to search for the cause of your decay, to examine what excess or imprudence you are chargeable with, and rectify your conduct for the future; and especially to inquire whether any criminal conduct towards GOD, the neglect of his day, or worship; uncharitableness to the poor, or injustice to others; does not provoke the divine providence to blast your gains, and render your labours abortive. "For if ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart, &c." Mal. ii. 1. Hag. i. 4. 10. 2 Cor. ix. 6. Ezek. xxii. 13. Inspect therefore your conduct both to GOD and man; inspect the state of your *own* affairs; for it is better to survey your own accounts, than that *commissioners* should do it for you; and give me leave to add this advice, that if you find your condition so

low, as not to be more than sufficient to satisfy your creditors, prudence and justice require you to *stop in time;* hereby your reputation will be preserved as an honest man, and you will find even your creditors ready to assist your future attempts.

7th. *Prudence* is to be exercised in *governing those passions* to which our callings most expose us. The passions of the mind are natural to us, and inseparable from us; but the government of them, and subduing their excesses, is the business of *wisdom* and *virtue.* To be a servant to them is a misery below a slave; this bondage the Tradesman is in danger of from various causes. Sometimes *discontent* is ready to seize him because the wind does not favour his merchandise, or the weather his manufacture. He is subject to *envy*, from the superior prosperity and success of others, whom he observes to have more custom or credit than himself. The passion of *fear*, which was implanted in our natures to prevent evils, and not to increase them, is apt to fluctuate his mind and sink his spirits; and it is the triumph of *prudence* to extinguish the excesses of it. When we have done our duty, and acted according to the best of our judgements, we should no longer tor-

ment ourselves about the event of things, but leave ourselves and all our concerns to the wise and good providence of GOD. But foolish *hopes* are often more fatal to the present and eternal concerns of men, than groundless fears; these, thoug huncomfortable, quicken the spirits to vigour and activity, to prevent the evils apprehended; the others leave us in a fatal security and presumption. How many Tradesmen are ruined by their *vain hopes!* Some enriching scheme, like the *ignis fatuus*, glitters at a distance, and leads them through manifold difficulties in the pursuit, but when it is approached, vanishes into air; others have great expectations from the death of rich friends, or some precarious contingency, in the imagination of which they neglect their proper business, live above their present estates, and like the dog in the fable, quit their present possessions to catch at shadows. Yea, many times such is the infatuation, though they feel themselves sinking, they buoy up their spirits with these *foolish hopes*, until they can neither avoid their fall, nor recover from it.

Another passion too common to the Tradesman is rash *anger*; to this he is more or less exposed according to his na-

tural temper, and employment; and *wisdom* and *prudence* must be exercised to suppress it. Though customers may be provoking; servants and workmen, idle and unfaithful; relatives clamorous and peevish; yet religious *wisdom* and *prudence* will so far influence the Tradesman that is possessed of it, that they shall not greatly disturb the peace of his mind, nor disorder the management of his affairs; or render him rude and insolent to his customers; for this is a certain maxim, that the more we are governed by *wisdom*, the less we shall be inflamed by *passion*.

8th. This *discretion* is to be employed in a *prudent consideration of the contingencies of our callings*. These are exceeding various, and fall under the observation of every Tradesman in his way. If there was in every trade a certain and constant method, and chain of events, a small degree of sagacity would serve; but with many callings it is otherwise, which makes it necessary for us to use our *reason*, *observation* and *experience* to direct us when to extend or contract our sails, and what course to steer; always remembering to regulate our conduct by the rules of justice and charity to others; and not to exercise our penetration and judgment to preju-

dice and ensnare the less knowing and considerate. On the other hand, what is out of our power should be out of our care; we should consider that present *duty* is ours, but future *events* are GOD'S. Whatever disappointments we meet with in our callings, let us patiently and cheerfully submit to his wisdom and government, and still continue to trust in his goodness, to be constant in our duty, and diligent in our employments, hoping that our losses will soon be made up to us, either by the peace and enjoyment of our own minds, or by the blessings of divine providence, or both.

9th. This *prudence* is especially to be exercised *in avoiding those methods by which others have been ruined.* Every sinking Tradesman is a lesson of instruction to us, and it is far better to learn wisdom from the fatal experience of *others*, than our *own.* Let us cast our eyes abroad, and discern the rocks which they have dashed upon, and the quicksands in which they have been swallowed up, and let our prudence be employed in shunning them. To instance in a few:

Company keeping. I am speaking of it now, not in a religious, but prudential view; in this light, how often has excess

herein been the Tradesman's ruin! Business neglected, is business lost; and the Tradesman that can satisfy himself to be absent from his employ, has no right to expect success in it. Much conversation abroad must necessarily take up much *time*, and is usually attended with great *expense*. The *loss* of the first is often more fatal than that of the last; as money may be recovered, but time cannot. In the hours of absence, business presents, a valuable customer comes to *buy*, who not finding the master goes elsewhere. An unexpected bargain offers to be *sold*, an advantage which may never return again. *Servants* are hereby left to themselves, who if they are unfaithful and negligent, embezzle the cash, disoblige the customers, destroy and spoil the manufactures, and do an inexpressible wrong. It may at first view appear strange, but it is certainly true, that the injury is as great if they are diligent, obliging and faithful. The servant who used to *act as master* in the shop, and render himself acceptable to the customers in his master's absence; when his time is expired, or he sets up for himself, will necessarily draw the customers with him. The man that was contented with the shadow of *authority* in his shop, will find only

the shadow of *business* left there, when his ingenious and ruling servant is separated from him. Let your attendance in business be constant, your commodities good, the prices reasonable, and your deportment civil; and I may venture to answer for it that you will find more success in this way, under the blessing of providence, than by a wandering pursuit of business *abroad*, to the loss of time, expense of money, the neglect of servants and family; and, which is a consequence more to be dreaded than all the rest, and too frequent to be passed by without regard, the loss of the soul, by the contagion of corrupt principles and evil practices. "They that are least sensible of their danger in this respect, are most likely to feel its fatal effects."

Suretiship. Though this may be lawful, and in some cases necessary, it requires the utmost care and caution. Nothing can justify our entering into obligations of this nature, unless we are able to make them good *without injury* to ourselves and families, or perturbation of mind, and can pay them with the same freedom as we do *other debts*; for certainly the whole obligation lies upon the *surety*, both in law and conscience, in case the principal

proves insolvent; and who can be content to run these risques? If it be objected, that there is *no trading* without doing this act of friendship for one another; I answer; although men cannot in all instances, trade so high without it, the desire of which may proceed from pride and covetousness, and end in ruin; yet trade may be carried on in a way more safe, and not less comfortable. If the person is a man of prudence and integrity, the creditor may rely upon his single bond, without entangling another with him; and if he is not so, I am sure he is not fit for your trust. If a refusal to enter into obligations of this sort is charged upon you, as the want of friendship or gratitude; study to oblige them some other way, and endeavour to convince them that it is not a defect of honour or friendship which occasions your denial; for alas, this person who now solicits you, may be *deeper in debt* than you are aware of: or he may be *bound for others* for more than he is worth; or he may be *less careful* and *just* than you imagine: or at least he is *mortal* and may leave his estate and you so much entangled at his death, as may be exceedingly injurious, if not totally destructive to you. Therefore, "my son, be not thou one of

them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. *But if thou art engaged*, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast given thy hand to a stranger; thou art snared with the words of thy mouth. Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, until thou hast delivered thyself, &c." Prov. vi. 1, 5. Chap. xxii. 26. Chap. xi. 15.*

Gaming, is another ruinous practice which prudence will preserve you from. Much time is spent by many in this idle course; and I doubt a pack of *cards*, or a game at *tables*, have often occasioned the exercises of religion (private and family) to be neglected. Though many other vices may *certainly* ruin you, yet *gaming* and *suretiship* may very *suddenly* do it. Many have by these in a few hours undone themselves and their families beyond all recovery. Let no temptation, therefore, of a speedy gain, engage you in a course so opposite to the laws of GOD, and the friendship and love that is due to man,

* I do not by this intend to suggest, that there are no cases in which suretiship for others may be prudently entered into, but my design is to caution the Tradesman against those rash, unthinking engagements, which have been attended with such evil consequences to many, and often proved their utter ruin.

and so ruinous and destructive to those that enter into it; but fix your unalterable resolutions against it. "Enter not into *this* path of the wicked, and go not in *this* way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Prov. iv. 14, 15.

Prudence will teach you to avoid *an excessive curiosity;* or a *busy intermeddling* with the concerns of others. Every Tradesman has business enough at home to employ his time and faculties; either in works of piety to GOD, charity to the distressed, civility to friends and relatives, or the necessary employments of his calling; but there is no wisdom in intermeddling with the concerns of others, without a just cause, and a due call. Much time is lost, and little good is obtained, by this *trifling disposition.* Let it be your endeavour to fill up the station in which you are placed with proper duty, and to promote the public good by all prudent and laudable means; but let no pretence how pious soever, nor any prospect how specious soever, nor any pressure how great soever, prevail with you to disturb the public peace, to dishonour your rulers, or to embark in any design unjustifiable by the laws you are to be governed by. Let GOD alone to rule the

world; let the lawful magistrate alone to rule his *subjects;* and let it be your business cheerfully to obey, or quietly to suffer. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: but let none of you suffer as an *evil doer*, or as a *busy body* in other men's matters." 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15.

10th. *Prudence* will direct you *so to dispose the common business of life, as not to obstruct the duties of religion;* but that they may harmonize and assist each other. The pious Tradesman, whatever his business or necessity may be, will *redeem some time* for the noble and necessary employments of religion: and will not so far consider his relation to the *present state*, as to forget the eternal concerns of another world. His devotion disposes him for his business, and his business makes his devotion welcome. The less time he can spare in the week, the more careful he is to improve the christian sabbath, when it returns. Thus he draws down the blessing of heaven upon all the labours of life, and gains that wisdom and virtue, which enables him to fulfill the duties and bear the burdens of it. But imprudence, as well as irreligion, often renders the exercises of devotion distasteful; the unfitness of the seasons of it, or the undue choice of other

circumstances, occasions confusion in the discharge of it; which if it were prudently and sincerely performed, would appear the most delightful and beneficial employment of time.

To conclude; from what has been said, we learn of what importance *prudence* is to a Tradesman. It may be of more service to him than all his *stock* or all his *friends:* it will make him *amiable* and *useful* to others, and *happy* in himself It should therefore be our concern to acquire as much of this excellent quality as may be. It is true, *sagacity* is a natural gift, and all men do not seem to be equally endowed with it; but it may be *improved*, as any other faculty of the mind may. Reasoning on the probable consequences of things, with a careful observation of events as they arise, may be of great use; but above all it is necessary we should get the command of our passions; that they may not bias our judgment, nor hurry us on to action before we have deliberated at all, or in proportion to the importance and difficulty of the matter. For generally, imprudent steps are taken, not for want of *capacity* to judge of their nature or consequences; but through *passion* and *haste* men do what they themselves could see to

be imprudent, if they would allow themselves time to think coolly and maturely upon it.

Consider *persons* and *things;* whereby your wisdom will be greatly improved: every thriving or decaying Tradesman will be a lesson of instruction to you. *Solomon* learned wisdom this way; "he looked upon the field of the slothful, he considered it, and received instruction:" and do you imitate him therein.

Consult wise men. The long observations of *others* may soon be yours if you are willing to learn: do not think that all the methods and rules of wisdom and prudence, are to be grasped by your own skill; but rather choose to be learning among the wise, than priding yourself among the foolish: for *he that hearkeneth unto counsel,* as well as he that is able to give it, *is wise.*

Study the sacred scriptures. These are the words of the only wise GOD. There you will find precepts of wisdom suited to every state and condition of life; particularly in that excellent collection of *Proverbs,* which was dictated by the Spirit of GOD on purpose to convey to the "young man knowledge and discretion." Prov. i. 4. A book therefore, which should often be consulted by every religious Tradesman,

Pray that the Father of lights would *instruct* you: for "he giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh understanding, &c." Prov. ii. 6. "He gives it to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." And he has said, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of GOD." He knows all the connections of things, he can influence your mind, and direct your thoughts; can save you from fatal errors in *civil* as well as *religious* life, and keep off temptations of one kind and another. GOD can *give* more wisdom than man can *acquire* of himself, and those who most seriously and constantly depend upon him, are certainly the persons that are most likely to be possessed of that wisdom, which GOD himself will approve.

What I am recommending is an honest and laudable habit of *prudence*, not that which degenerates into *subtilty* and *craft*. Let none under the pretence of wisdom allow themselves to *over-reach* or *deceive* others, or make a prey of their easy and well meaning neighbours, to compass their own covetous or ambitious ends. This is wisdom *from beneath;* and as it comes from hell, so it leads to it: for the "unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD;" 1 Cor. vi. 9. and the Apostle adds, "be not deceived:" a caution that plainly

intimates, it is more than possible the prospect of gain may blind the minds of men, and make them insensible of their guilt and danger. Whatever apprehensions these persons may have of their sagacity and prudence, the world cannot produce a *greater fool*, than he that will affront God, injure his neighbour, and destroy his own soul, for the sake of a *little momentary gain*.

CHAP. IV.

OF DILIGENCE.

DILIGENCE, as it relates to trade, is an *habitual employment of our bodily and mental powers about our proper callings*, in a just and happy medium between idleness, supineness, and trifling curiosity on the one hand; and slavish drudging and immoderate care on the other. It differs not in the *religious* Tradesman from the same virtue in *other* men, but as it flows from a better *principle*, and is directed to an higher *end*. The vicious and profane, as they know not GOD, so they live not to him; all their labours and views centre *in themselves*, and the indulgence of their appetites and desires is the principal guide and end of all their actions. But the good man considers himself, whatever may be his station in life, as the *servant* of divine providence; and makes the word of GOD the rule, and the honour of GOD the end of his common employments: he is

diligent from a sense of duty, as well as from the prospect of gain. This virtue is chiefly exercised in the following particulars.

1st. *In the serious employment of the powers of mind and body, in our callings.* Whatever sagacity of mind, depth of judgment, or quickness of invention you are endowed with should be employed. GOD hath appointed the honest labours of life to provide support for the body, and prevent the distempers of the mind; sober *industry* spends those exuberant spirits, which otherwise are apt to break forth in unlawful flames; for the more laborious the less lascivious: indeed we are not required so to exhaust our strength in the business of the day, as to leave ourselves spiritless in the close of it; but in moderation we should not be backward to exert ourselves in our employments, seeing GOD *accepts of our labour*; and will by food and rest recruit our strength and spirits again.

2d. *In employing the substance of our time in our callings.* As the servant's time is his master's, so the master's time is GOD's, and not his own; which the religious Tradesman will carefully improve, and wisely divide between the concerns of this life and the next. Hours have wings,

and every moment flies up to the Author of time, and carries notice of our usage of it. The industrious Tradesman will, if health permit, be stirring early, and continue with cheerful diligence in his business. His family, and shop, his friends, or the public, teaching or learning, will find him full employment for his time; and he will need no miserable helps to destroy that which flies with so swift a speed. "Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour, until the evening." Psalm civ. 23.

3d. *In laying hold of opportunities;* for diligence includes watchfulness. Great things may sometimes be done in a little time; and opportunities if embraced, will reward our care and diligence; if they are let slip, may never present themselves again; for "to every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose." These are like wind and tide, with which men sail with ease and expedition, and these the diligent Tradesman will be careful to observe and improve. Care is as necessary to success as labour; let men be ever so industrious and painful, unless they are considerate and *watchful*, their success is like to be but small.

4th. *In a becaming attention to little things.* Many *small* matters arise in time

to something considerable: a small customer attended to and pleased, shews the way to a greater: but the disdaining to get or save things of small value, is often punished by divine providence, in reducing such pride and carelessness to indigence and want. It is the remark of a very wise man, "he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." Eccles. xix. 1. The gifts of the Creator's bounty, *abused* by one man's folly and vanity, are often *transferred* to another, who will make a better use of them. God forbid that I should encourage a covetous, sordid disposition; what I recommend, is a diligent care to make the best use of things, and to regard those *smaller* matters on which *greater* depend, or which by some few *repetitions* may amount to something considerable. A constant and careful respect to this has raised many persons to a considerable estate, and enabled others, even with a little, to do much more good than the careless persons can do even with a large income. Our divine Master has herein proposed his own conduct for our imitation, who, when he had fed *five thousand* people with only *five* loaves and *two* fishes, by which he had shewn how easily he could create food, yet ordered the *frag-*

ments to be gathered up, that "nothing might be lost." John vi. 12.

5th. *In rejecting those avocations which would divert you from your business.* The Tradesman's shop or warehouse should be the place of his delight; from whence he should not wander without some reasonable motive; for here his business and his advantage lies.

Diligence will guard you against consuming your time and substance at *houses of public entertainment.* How many must be sought at the *tavern*, &c. who should be found in their shops, and are expending that money at *places of entertainment*, of which, duty to their families, and justice to others, call for a different account. And, indeed, this diligence will abridge all *unnecessary time-wasting* pleasures and recreations.

Needless and *fruitless visits* will be restrained by this diligence. A due performance of these is necessary to friendship and business; but *idle*, *gossiping visits*, which are employed in ransacking the affairs or faults of others; judging or condemning those who by their absence are incapable of defending themselves; or in censuring the methods of public administration, the reasons and springs of which

are entirely unknown to persons in common life; these the diligent Tradesman avoids. His visits will be commonly *short, serious* and *cheerful;* whereby he may leave a relish of goodness behind him, and a desire in his friends to see him again.

Let the religious Tradesman be *excited* to the practice of *industry.* It conduces much (under the favour of providence) to our temporal *prosperity:* the diligent are usually blessed with plenty; and no doubt affluence is a blessing, notwithstanding the frequent perversion of it, or else it had never been made the subject of so many divine promises; if riches and honour are good for you, this is the *way* to attain them; for, as there is no calling so great but *sloth will impoverish,* so there are few so mean, but diligence will improve. But whatever our success is, I am sure it is most conducive to our *comfort.* I dare appeal to every one's experience, whether they find not more inward peace and satisfaction when the day has been diligently employed in their proper callings; than when it has been trifled away in sloth and folly. And it heightens our relish for the rest and refreshments of life: for the food as well as "the sleep of the labouring man

is sweet." But then, let us be very cautious that this diligence does not degenerate into *covetousness*, and we thereby lose the reward, as we extinguish the virtue of it; and contract a curse, instead of gaining a blessing by it.

Let the blessed GOD be owned and honoured, by *humble prayer*, for a blessing on your diligence; and *affectionate praise* and *gratitude* for success therein. "He it is that giveth you power to get wealth." Deut. viii. 18. "And without his blessing it is in vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and to eat the bread of carefulness." Psalm. cxxvii. 2. He governs and influences the minds of others, and directs all those circumstances which must concur to your success. And his providence must *preserve* what his bounty bestows, or else a thousand accidents will soon deprive you thereof.

Let us close this chapter with an obvious reflection. Is *diligence* so much a duty in the common business of *this life;* how much more is it so in the great concerns of *religion* and an *eternal world?* If earthly riches do not drop into the mouths of men while sleeping, nor are to be obtained without labour and care; much less are the *habits* of virtue and goodness, and the

rewards of glory and happiness. God will not carry us to heaven like stones, without any sense or motion of our own; but requires us to shew our esteem of his eternal grace and favour, by *running*, *fighting*, *wrestling*, and *striving** for it, before he bestows it upon us. As *sloth* is the evident cause of men's present poverty, so it is of their future misery; they will not be at the *pains* to be saved, though all the labour in religion is accompanied with real pleasure and sweetness. Let the foregoing directions be attended to for the prosperity of your souls, as well as that of your callings; 1. *Seriously employ all the powers of nature*, in the service and love of the ever blessed God. 2. *Let time be diligently improved;* let not that be mispent, or run waste, while work of so great importance lies before you. 3. *Lay hold of every opportunity* for doing or receiving good. 4. *Take a becoming care* of those things that are accounted *small*, though nothing that relates to God, and another world, is really so; let no small duty be omitted, and no small sin indulged; for a man may as surely bleed to death by the wound of a lancet, as by that of a sword.

* These are scripture metaphors.

5. And *reject those avocations* which would *divert you from* the great business of religion. Let not the world, the flesh, or the devil, draw away your minds from the love and duty which you owe to GOD, and the concern that is necessary for the salvation of the soul.

"Pharaoh said unto Joseph, If thou knowest any men of *activity* amongst thy brethren, then make them rulers over my cattle, *Gen.* xlvii. 5, 6.

"The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour; and Solomon seeing the young man that he was *industrious*, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph, 1 *Kings* xi. 28.

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a *slack* hand; but the hand of the *diligent* maketh rich. He that *gathereth* in summer, is a wise son; but he that *sleepeth* in harvest, is a son that causeth shame, *Prov.* x. 4, 5.

"He that *tilleth his land* shall be satisfied with bread: but he that *followeth vain persons* is void of understanding. The hand of the *diligent* shall bear rule; but the *slothful* shall be under tribute. The substance of a *diligent* man is precious, *Prov.* xii. 11, 24, 27.

"He that is *slothful* in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster, *Prov.* xviii. 9.

"The *sluggard* will not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing. Love not *sleep*, lest thou come to poverty. Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread, *Prov.* xx. 4, 13.

"He that loveth *pleasure* shall be a poor man. He that loveth wine and oil, shall not be rich, *Prov.* xxi. 17.

"Seest thou a man *diligent* in his business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men, *Prov.* xxii. 29.

"I went by the field of the *slothful*, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep. So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man, *Prov.* xxiv. 30, 34.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with *thy might;* for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest, *Eccles.* ix. 10."

CHAP. V.

OF JUSTICE.

THE *nature* of *justice*, as it resp
men's dealings with each other, is cont
ed in that divine rule of our bles
Lord's; "Whatsoever ye would that n
should do unto you, do ye even so u
them;" that is, do ye in all cases to oth
whatsoever is fit for you to expect fr
them in like circumstances. It is an h
of mind that disposes us to *render to
their dues;* and, as was said of diligen
it differs not in the real christian from
same virtue in others, but as faith in
Lord Jesus, reverence to GOD, and a l
to goodness, are the springs of it. I sa
is a habit of the mind: for it relates
merely to a particular action, but the *ge
ral* series and tenor of our lives. So
alone deserves the honourable name
just, whose conduct is *uniformly* upri
and who has such a love to justice, as
maintain its practice, whether it m

with present applause or not, or even though it should sometimes thwart his apparent interest, *Psalm* xv. 4.

Our *obligations* to this great duty are manifold: 1. The light of *nature* and *reason* of things, enforce it. The Roman Emperor *Severus* so much admired that golden rule of our Saviour's, "*Quid tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris;* what you would not have done to you, do not to others;" that he made it his *motto*, and caused it to be written on his doors and buildings, and enrolled the divine Author of it among his gods; and would to GOD it was more legibly inscribed, not so much upon the *walls*, as in the *hearts* and *lives* of those who call themselves christians.

2. The *moral law* of GOD obliges us to the practice of *justice:* this is the sum of the duties required in the second table; which indeed is only a new edition of the law of nature. "Thou shalt not covet," excludes the principles, and "Thou shalt not steal," prohibits the practice of whatsoever is unjust or dishonourable in our conduct to others; and these rules are enforced by numerous and repeated injunctions. "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye *judgment*, and do *justice*, and speak every man truth with his neighbour." Isa. lvi. 1,

Zech. viii. 16. "Thou shalt not *defraud* thy neighbour: but that which is altogether *just* shalt thou follow." Lev. xix. 13. Deut. xvi. 20. He has strengthened these precepts with *threatenings* of severe punishment in case of disobedience; many instances of the performance of which are visible in this world, but many more are reserved to the great and solemn day of retribution. The *gospel* of Christ binds the consciences of all who expect to receive a share in the blessings of it, to the exact performance of this duty; it is the very design of it "to teach men to live soberly, and *righteously*, as well as godly, in this present world." Tit. ii. 12. It deprives the *unjust* of any present claim to the benefits of it; for "if they are *not faithful* in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to their trust the true riches?" Luke xvi. 10, 12. And utterly excludes them from the hopes of the future glories and rewards of it: "know ye not that the *unrighteous* shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? be not deceived; neither thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of GOD." 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. So that he who allows himself to violate the laws of *justice*, maims christianity; and, whatever his profession of religion

may be, it is false and insincere; for he can never be *true to* GOD, who is *unjust to man*, nor can he reasonably hope to be *accepted* of him.

And not only duty and conscience, but *present interest* obliges men to the exercise of *probity* and *justice*: it is the surest and safest way to prosperity, and has a natural tendency to promote it: the universal practice of it will necessarily establish a *good character*, upon which much of the Tradesman's success depends; every one loves to deal with an *honest man;* and the credit and reputation that attends it procures many advantages to the possessor of it. Though the indiscretion of some honest and just men may keep them poor; and divine providence may afflict others, to convince an unbelieving world of a judgment to come; yet the good GOD evidently *blesses* many with temporal prosperity to shew his love to righteousness, and the goodness of his providence in the present state. "The faithful man shall abound with blessings; *while* he that hasteth to be rich *by injustice and deceit* shall be punished." Prov. xxviii. 20. Shame and misery are the natural fruits of injustice and fraud; and when men have increased their wealth, and feathered their nests with

the spoils of others, the divine vengeance, like *a fire not blown*, often *consumes them;* and it does not rest here, "for it goes ill with them that are left in their tabernacles," Job. xx. 26. So odious is this sin to GOD, that even the *posterity* of the unjust and oppressive shall feel the effects of his indignation against it; and we may often observe that ill gotten wealth moulders away we know not how, in the hands of those for whom it was *unjustly* laid up.

Having thus briefly considered the *nature* of justice, and our *obligations* to the practice of it, we proceed to specify the *instances* in which the Tradesman is to exercise it.

1st. *Justice* obliges the Tradesman to *make conscientious bargains;* that he neither *sells* too dear, nor *buys* to cheap; but does by others as he would be dealt by himself.

1. It requires us to exact only a *rsasonable proportion of gain* from what we sell. The measure of allowable gain for all Tradesmen cannot be determined by any particular rule: it cannot be always measured by what the commodity *cost*, since surprise or ignorance may occasion a dear purchase; and why should others pay for my folly? Or it might by some special oc-

currence be obtained very cheap; and no reason will oblige me to give away that advantage. The rates at which *some others sell*, cannot always be the proper measure of gain; for they may be necessitated to sell at under rates, and why should other men's indigence prejudice me? Or they may undersell others to gain customers, taking too little for one thing, and over-reaching them in others; and why should that mean artifice regulate those that are above it? Or else they may be unreasonable and extravagant in their prices, and why must I be governed by their covetousness? What a commodity hath *formerly* sold for, can be no just rule; for every one knows that prices ebb and flow, and what was worth a guinea last year, may not be worth half so much this. Nor is, what will *maintain* the Tradesman and his family, a sure guide; for two shillings in the pound may be profit sufficient for those whose returns are considerable, or their expenses small; whereas twice as much may not suffice for the supply of a numerous, or sickly family. But then the *most we can get*, is very far from being a just measure for our gains, for it is possible to exact twice the value of a commodity from an unskilful or unwary customer,

which is downright injustice and fraud. Nor, lastly, can the *intrinsic worth*, be a constant rule for valuation; since in divers things that cannot be known, and in many others *fancy* is the only guide: so that the surest rule that can be given is the *market price*, which as it is the most general, so it is usually the least liable to exception; and less partial than the conduct of particular men. A due allowance is fit to be made for a person's *time* and *labour*, *hazard* and *skill*; and *long credit* makes it reasonoble for the Tradesman to advance the price of his goods, as he is thereby deprived of the *improvement* of his money, and runs some hazard of losing it; but in estimating the disadvantage on these heads, and making allowance for them, he is always to conduct himself by the rules of justice and honour; and desire no more gain from others when he sells, than he allows reasonable for others to gain by him when he is the purchaser; remembering that "light gains make an heavy purse, but large gains often make an heavy conscience."

2. Justice forbids *the taking advantage of another's necessity* in your bargains. Let not the cries of the *poor* ascend to GOD against you, for sinking the prices of

their labour or goods so low that it is impossible they should live upon the profits of them; nor let the *necessity* they are known to be under of receiving ready money for what they *sell*, for the subsistence of themselves and families, ever tempt you to withhold from them the allowance of *reasonable* gain. "I have known a sordid Tradesman buy manufactured metal of a necessitous workman for the same price that unmanufactured was known to cost, and then glory in his bargain;" but how common or gainful soever such practices may be, I am sure it is horrid *injustice* and *oppression;* if there is any providence of GOD in this world, or any truth in his word, the *divine curse* must needs attend all such iniquitous courses. If ever your covetousness tempts you to such kind of conduct, consider that confounding question which GOD, the poor man's King, puts unto you; "What mean ye that ye grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord GOD of hosts? Isa. iii. 15. and prevent the shame and confusion that must attend your answer to such an inquiry, by a sincere repentance, if you have been guilty herein; and a more *humane* and *christian* method of trade for the time to come. Nor let their *necessities* encou-

rage you to encroach upon them in what they want to *buy*, or in any thing they want to *borrow* for their necessary use, which is equal injustice and oppression with the former. Or if your fellow Tradesman should need *some commodity* to supply his customer with, shew your generosity and honour by using him *as you would be done unto;* and in no case wait for an advantage to prey upon the straits of others, for none would willingly be *so dealt with* themselves.

3. Make no advantage *of others unskilfulness* in your bargains. Every one is not endowed with knowledge or sagacity alike; persons may easily forget, mistake, or overshoot themselves: nay, it is impossible that any should be a competent judge of the value or goodness of *every* commodity they may want to purchase or sell: we must be sensible that this is often our *own* case; therefore if it is unjust and ungenerous for any to take advantage of *our* ignorance or oversight, it is equally so for us to do the same by *others;* what is wrong in one case must certainly be so in the other; and no excuse can justify us. Say not, my knowledge was given me to *improve* those opportunities to my advantage, and let every one look to them-

selves; for the just and righteous Governor of the world never gave any one superior understanding and skill to be *perverted* to such base and ungenerous purposes. Neither say, I only deal by *others*, as others deal *by me* in such cases; for it is just as reasonable to say, because my house has been set on fire by others, therefore I will burn my neighbour's. The criminal conduct of others can be no plea for your imitation. "Let no man *therefore* go beyond *(or overreach)* or defraud his brother in any matter; for GOD is the avenger of all such. 1 Thess. iv. 6.

4. Make no bargains with such as have *no just property* in what they are contracting about. Some care is due in this case in those that *sell*, that they encourage not children, or other weak people to traffic with them; who cannot reasonably be supposed to be trusted with money. But it especially concerns those who are tempted to *buy* such goods as they know, or greatly suspect to be *stolen*. It is true, thy *gains* may be large by such bargains, but I am sure thy *guilt* is greater. You assist and encourage them in their wickedness, and are evidently concerned in that divine censure, "When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him." Psal. l. 18. He

that knowingly *connives at* or *assists* in an evil action, *shares* in the guilt of it. And if you should be so artful as to escape the laws of man, which are strict against these transgressions; yet the penetrating eye of GOD always beholds you, who will sooner or later make you sensible of his indignation at your theft and covetousness. Say not, my shop is my *market*; for what honest man will buy a *stolen* horse in the market, if he knows or suspects it to be so? Neither plead, that if you buy them not, *others will*; for the wickedness of others will be no sufficient excuse for your iniquity. It is strange, that men, who reason and act prudently enough in other things, yet when the laws of their Creator interrupt their vicious inclinations, lose both sense and reason too, and will venture the anger of Almighty GOD, offer violence to their consciences, and hazard their reputations, rather than miss of a little sordid gain. Meddle not with such *dishonest* purchases, but choose even to be *poor with integrity*, rather than to be *rich by unrighteousness*.

5. Use yourselves to *an honest plainness* in your bargains. *Ordinary* and *discernable* faults the buyer is supposed to take notice of, but if your goods have any such

private or *undiscerned* defects, as would cause him to relinquish his purchase, or lessen his offers for them if he knew them, it is *unjust* to obtrude them upon him. It is not sufficient in this case to say, that you sell them at a price *proportionable*, (though I fear this is not always done) for the defects may so far lessen them in the buyer's esteem, or render them so unsuitable to his intention in the purchase of them, that he would not buy them at *any* rate; and it is not your formal cant, or fallacious harangues, that will alter the property of a bad commodity. If the buyer is censured for saying, *it is naught, it is naught*, in order to lessen the price, and when he goeth his way rejoiceth in the goodness of his purchase; I am sure the seller is equally guilty, who says, *it is faultless; it is excellent good;* when he knows it to be quite the reverse. Ask your consciences, if this conduct can be *justified* before GOD; or if it is doing by others as you would be *done unto?* If it be replied, we are under a necessity to *buy* damaged and faulty goods along with others, and we must *sell* them. I answer, buy as *few* of them as may be; and sell them to those who *understand* what they buy, and if you should lose something by them, ra-

ther than impose them upon the ignorant; the divine providence can easily and largely reward your selfdenial.

2d. *Justice* requires *the ready payment of all just debts* at the appointed time. Prudence will direct us to be cautious what debts we contract, but when they become due, justice requires that they be *punctually discharged;* otherwise we keep the possession while another has the right. The matter is not whether the creditor is rich or poor, for all have a right to claim their own; but it is an aggravating circumstance of guilt when the *necessitous*, the *widow* and the *fatherless* are injured. If you plead *inability*, this will neither justify, nor excuse you, unless GOD by his providence hath disabled you, in which case you are obliged to use all possible lawful endeavours to make due satisfaction; and both reason and justice require the *full* payment of your debts *whenever you are able*, even though your creditors, considering your indigent state, may accept of what your present abilities will allow: for right can never be *lost*, in conscience, where there is a *future* sufficiency; though it may be fit to be abated in law. But let not those calamities be charged on GOD's providence, which are the effects of

your own imprudence. Justice also requires that debts be paid not only fully, but *speedily*, as they become due. If we are not to say to our neighbour, *go, and come again, if we have it by us*, when he comes to *beg* or to *borrow*, Prov. iii. 28. much less when he asks only for that which is *his own;* you know not what necessity he may have for it, or what dependence he may place upon it, which may involve him in an hundred difficulties upon the disappointment; *he may be poor, and set his heart upon it;* and it is unmerciful as well as unjust, needlessly to *delay* the payment of it.

But the most inexcusable violation of *justice*, is, a Tradesman's *breaking upon design*, in order to defraud the creditors of their dues, and enrich himself with their spoils. Such iniquity can have no refuge to screen itself from confusion and remorse, but a seared conscience, or direct atheism. How many heinous sins dost thou wilfully and deliberately commit, for a little momentary gain! Here are repeated *lies*, if not *perjury; stealing*, notorious *hypocricy* and *dissimulation; contempt of* GOD's *law* and *justice*, and *injury to men.* How canst thou hope to es-

cape the righteous judgment of GOD who art guilty of crimes like these?

3d, *Justice* consists in using *exact weights and measures:* without these, commerce is a perfect cheat: "Thou shalt not have in thy bags divers weights, a great *(to buy with)* and a small *(to sell with:)* neither shalt thou have in thy house divers measures. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, and a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy GOD giveth thee. Deut. xv. 13, 16. Are there yet the treasures of deceit in the house of the wicked, and the *scant* measure, which is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of *deceitful* weights, saith the Lord?" Mic. vi. 10, 12. The *buyer* as well as the seller should be content with *just* and *equal* dealings, and not desire or endeavour to obtain more than he agrees for, or by any arts or deceits whatsoever to *impose* upon or *prejudice* his neighbour.

Among other frauds, *false lights* are justly reckoned; when Tradesmen so contrive the lights of their shops as to repre-

sent their commodities better than they really are; and when the chapman reviews his purchase at home, he finds it quite another thing; now what can be more *unjust* than this? It is deceiving thy neighbour, and no other that picking his purse of so much as is extorted from him by this means, above the real worth of the commodity.

4th. *Justice* obliges the Tradesman to the *right working of all manufactures.* Human laws often make provision for this; but the cases in which *fraud* may be committed are so various, that it is impossible to reach them all, and, unless men are under the awe of GOD and conscience, they will find evasions, and trample the laws under their feet. *Justice* will teach the Tradesman to do such work for *others*, as he would have done *for himself;* and not through sloth, multiplicity of business, or any covetous view, to render things *less serviceable* than they ought to be. It is true, it is not necessary to bestow *equal* care or labour upon every piece of work, the stuff, the price, or the design of it may not require it; but equity requires that every manufacture have the perfection *requisite* to its kind; and forbids the *deceitful* thrusting in of a baser stuff or metal instead of

a better, even though it may do the purchaser equal service, or he may never be sensible of the difference; because it is imposing upon his ignorance, and extorting a price from him above the *true value* of the commodity. Say not, the price will not allow that things be made as they ought, for it is the *slightness* of work that is the usual cause of reduction in the price; and if goods were better, the *prices* might be better too, as is evident from repeated facts, that they who do the best work have the greatest gains, as well as the most credit.

5th. *Justice* requires the ready and cheerful payment of all *lawful impositions*, *taxes*, or *customs*. As the Tradesman enjoys the *benefit* and *protection* of government; he should not think much to contribute to the *support* of it; and *to render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom.* Plead not that the *end* of taxations are not answered: For it is hard to prove the matter of fact, and the care of the government ought not to be censured without clear and uncontrolable evidence. The neglect of *subordinate* officers must not be thrown upon the *chief* magistrate, unless it be frequent, notorious, and after due information. And after all,

there ever were, and will be some oversights; some unworthy persons employed, who will seek their own, and not the public good: whose negligence must be corrected by their superiors, and not pleaded in excuse for the neglect of *duty*, by every private person.

And as you should "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; so should you "render to GOD the things that are GOD's." If you expect the blessing of Heaven, withhold not from his *Ministers* whatsoever is due unto them; for "GOD hath ordained that they which preach the gospel, should live by the gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 14. As they have relinquished the gainful employments of life for the service of GOD and the interests of religion; they have a claim to be *supported* in a manner becoming their office, that they may be freed from the anxieties of want, and may be *examples*, as well as promoters of charity to others: and this is not only a point of religion and charity, but *justice* and *equity*.

6th. *Justice* requires the Tradesman *to pay due respect to the laws and orders of his society:* to the observation of which, the members thereof are usually obliged by oath. Supposing these laws to be agreeable to the dictates of reason and religion,

justice and conscience obliges your obedience to them, although they may sometimes interfere with your private interest.

7th. *Justice* demands an *equitable regard to your fellow Tradesman.* Though every man may use all lawful methods to increase and secure his custom; yet, charity should keep us from hindering those that are *poorer* than ourselves; and justice forbids the gaining customers or chapmen from others, by any *dishonourable* or *indirect* means: particularly, let every unjust reflection, and depreciating insinuation on your fellow Tradesman's *character* or *goods* be abhorred; and every other mean artifice, to increase your business, at the expense of your neighbour's. But let this always be your governing principle, *to do unto thers as you would be done unto.* And though masters should be content that their apprentices at setting up should carry away some customers from them, being part of the consideration for their time and money; yet no ingenuous apprentice will use any *unworthy* means to gain customers to himself; or do any thing but what is common and approvedly done in that case, either *before* or *after* the expiration of his time; remembering that when he comes in-

to the same circumstances, he himself will not be contented with such usage.

Again, *ingrossing of commodities*, whereby many are impoverished for the enriching of a few; whether it be done by societies or single persons, is directly contrary to the laws of *justice* and *charity;* which commands us to *love our neighbours as ourselves:* and not to seek our own advantage to the prejudice of others. Men may "boast when they do well for themselves; and others may bless the covetous whom GOD abhors;" Psalm x. 3. but the common and tender *Father* of all, cannot but hate these gains of oppression, and punish this method of *hastening to be rich;* and we often see the effects thereof, in the fall and ruin of those who thought to enrich themselves by these gains of unrighteousness.

Neither is it agreeable to *justice* and *equity*, for the rich Tradesman or Artificer, whose estate perhaps may bear him out, in such a manner to *undersell* his poorer fellow Tradesman, that they wanting his stock and credit, cannot preserve their customers, or subsit upon those prices. This conduct is especially criminal where the very design of it is to weaken and impoverish others.

Lastly. That *injustice* is intolerable which is offered to your *partners in trade*, who repose the same confidence in you, as they do in themselves; and to whom you are bound by all the strictest ties of *law*, *conscience*, and *mutual confidence*. For such persons to undermine or purloin, from each other, is a crime that deserves the severest censure; and cannot be practised by any who have not lost all love to virtue, or fear of shame.

8th. *Justice* obliges the Tradesman to a *paternal care about his apprentices*. Prudence directs to choose such as are of sober characters, tolerable tempers, and capacities fit for business; but those whom you see fit to bind and receive into your families, *justice* obliges you to use in the same manner as you would have your *own children treated*, when they come into the same condition.

1. Beware of undue *severity* and *rigour* towards them; this will discourage them in your service, make their time and life a burden; and it is well if worse consequences do not attend it. Remember that you were once in the same state, and repeat not upon them, what was then justly esteemed an hardship by yourself. Remember that *you also have a Master in heaven*,

who rules by love and just authority, and not by severity and vengeance; and do you imitate him therein. Let the government of your servants be such as may command love and esteem, as well as respect and obedience, that they may feel it to be as much their *interest*, as their *duty* to serve you. Maintain your authority over them by a life of *virtue* and *religion*; this will produce reverence, and enforce respect much more effectually than any domineering austerity in words or behaviour. Impose not too *heavy tasks* upon them; make not their lives bitter by cruel bondage, lest they *cry unto* GOD against you. Remember their years, and bear with frailties and imperfections? charge them not with faults without cause, nor refuse to hear their just apologies. Remember the reflection of *Job* in the like case, "if I did despise the cause of my man servant, or of my maid servant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when GOD riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb." Job xxxi. 13, 15. Let them have *food* and *rest* convenient for them. For *quality*, let it be such as is

suitable to their condition; for *quantity*, let it be sufficient for their necessary refreshment; and for *time* and *season*, let it be such as is most conducive to their health and comfort. Be full as ready to *encourage* them when they do well, as to reprove them when they do amiss; that they may be sensible of your good will to them, as well as your authority over them. "Thou shalt not rule over them with rigour, but shalt fear thy GOD." Levit. xxv. 43.

2. But then, be watchful against a *weak indulgence* towards them. Improve your just authority over them, for maintaining in the whole of their conduct a *due respect* to GOD and yourselves. Indulge them in no *known evil*. Recommend to them, both by example and precept, the religious fear of GOD, and justice and truth to man. Above all, diligently watch over them to preserve them from the infection of *evil company*; to this end, take an exact account of their time when they are absent from you; for it is then that they contract their pernicious acquaintance. Especially, let your authority be exercised over them for the religious observance of the *Lord's day*, for many have dated their ruin from the faulty liberties they were *then* indulged in.

9th. *Justice* will excite the Tradesman, (if in such relations in life) to make *due provision for his wife and children.* The *wife* perhaps hath been useful in the shop or the family, to preserve or increase your estate, and govern and inspect the affairs of the household; or however, she is *bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh*, and hath forsaken her parents and friends, to cast herself upon your love and care: you are bound, therefore, by all sacred and human ties, to secure her comfort so far as lies in your power. Your *children* are parts of yourself, whom you brought into the world in an helpless and dependant state; it is unnatural and unjust not to support and provide for them: yet such is the idleness and negligence, such the prodigality and voluptuousness of many Tradesmen, that *misery* and *tears* are the only inheritance they leave to their distressed families. The goods are appraised, but they are *few* or *unsaleable;* the books are examined, but *no comfort* is to be found from them; the poor wife is forced to live upon her *friends*, or pine away in *want;* and the children to wander *desolate* and *forsaken.* O wretched injustice! Can the posterity of such men rise up and call them *blessed*,

who make them heirs to nothing but poverty and distress? Or will it excuse them that they have been *just to others*, who are thus cruel to their *own flesh?* No. Limit yourselves in the expenses of dress, diet, and furniture; allow yourselves in no unreasonable or costly pleasures; be diligent in your callings, and prudent in your concerns; that you may leave your families *above* the charity of their friends, and enable them to live when your period of life ceases; that your exit may not be like the brutes, who have no concern for the offspring they leave behind them. "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children. Wealth and riches are in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever." Prov. xiii. 22. and Psal. cxii. 3.

10th. This *justice* in the Tradesman, obligeth him *to shew mercy to the poor;* for righteousness containeth charity. Psal. cxii. 9. 2 Cor. ix. 9. Men are but *stewards* of what they possess to the great God, who is the original proprietor of all things; as much as is needful for their own use, he allows them to appropriate to themselves, and has appointed the poor and necessitous to be the receivers of the *rest;* we are not therefore "to withhold good from them to whom it is *due*, when

it is in the power of our hands to do it." Prov. iii. 27. We should improve the *talent* of wealth as good servants of our great Master; and so regulate our expenses, and employ our skill and care, that we may be assistant to others; *working with our hand*, or labouring with our heads, "the thing that is good, that we may have to give to him that needeth." Eph. iv. 28. The *goodness* of GOD is his glory; nor is there a more amiable disposition in his creatures, or any thing that yields greater delight to an humane and pious heart, or is more likely to meet with a generous reward from a good GOD, than a sincere disposition to imitate him herein. Let the Tradesman therefore, in a course of diligence and prudence, trust GOD with futurity, and *enlarge his heart*, and *extend his compassions* to the proper objects of them.

And here a large field is before you.—Either there are some poor *relations* of your own; or GOD hath some poor *children* of his, whose necessities call for relief. Or some poor, faithful *ministers* of Christ, who instead of living to study and do good, are obliged to study to live and get bread. Or some poor *Tradesmen*, and house keepers, that often want work, and therefore want bread; or whose families

are large, and their afflictions many; whose patience prevents their complaints, and whose modesty unfits them for asking; and therefore languish and pine in distress. Besides schools for the *young*, relief for the *sick* or *lame*, and assistance for the *aged* and *helpless*. All which are proper and necessary objects for your charity, as far as your abilities extend.

And that you may be free and liberal herein, *lay by* for this purpose, in some due proportion, "as GOD has blessed you," 1 Cor. xvi. 2. either weekly, monthly, or yearly, as the nature of your incomes are: this method will free you from the uncertainty that those must be under, who only occasionally stretch forth their hands as objects offer: and having thus a stock *devoted* to sacred and charitable uses, you will be much more free on all proper occasions to exercise your bounty and liberality: always judging, that well ordered charity is the *surest* and *safest way to thrive*; as what is expended this way is lent on the best security, and the largest interest: Prov. xix. 17. ch. iii. 9. namely, on the faithfulness and bounty of GOD.

11th. *Justice* requires *a punctual regard to all lawful contracts*. But as this is a branch of that *truth* which is due from

man to man, I shall take notice of it under that head.

12th. Lastly, *Justice* demands a *speedy restitution* of whatever may have been *unlawfully* gained, or acquired. This is a duty so evident, that one would think little need to be said to prove it necessary. 1. *Religion* requires it; conscience can never be pacified, nor guilt removed, while the gains of injustice are in our hands; nor that repentance be sincere, which is not attended with a real purpose and resolution to restore what has been *iniquitously* gotten. For repentance is the *undoing*, as far as we are able, what has been done amiss; if it was criminal for you to injure your neighbour at first, the crime still remains, while you continue voluntarily to *detain* from him what is his due: and therefore GOD commanded, that "when any trespassed against the Lord," *i. e.* by defrauding another (and observe by the way, that though men are the immediate objects, yet GOD esteems injustice to them as done against Himself, because it is the violation of His law, and the contempt of His authority;) "then they shall confess their sin, and recompence the trespass with the principal, and add the fifth part thereto, and give to him against whom he hath

trespassed," as a satisfaction for the inconveniences that the injured party might have suffered. Numb. v. 6, 7. The *moral equity* of which law binds the consciences of *all* men to the end of time. When *Nehemiah* had engaged the Jews, who had been guilty of oppression, to a promise of restoring what they were unrighteously possessed of, he adds this divine communication: "GOD so shake out every man from his house, and from his labour that performeth not his promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied; and all the people said, amen." Nehem. v. 2, 13. And *Zaccheus* immediately fell under the conviction of *this* duty; when our blessed Saviour invited Himself to his house, he knew no better proof that he could give him of the sense he had of his past errors, and the sincerity of his present affection, than engaging himself, "where he had injured any man, whether good or bad, rich or poor, king or subject, presently to restore fourfold." Luke xix. 8. This shews, that the natural consciences of men own *restitution* as a duty; and if ever salvation come to your house, and the influence of religion upon your hearts, you will go and do likewise.

2. *Interest* requires it. While God is the righteous Governor of the world, the gains of *injustice* can never be blessings to the possessors of them. They are often blown away by the blast of God, like chaff before the wind; but if they remain, the divine *curse* remains with them; and like the *leprosy*, spreads infection to all that you possess. If you are *incapable* of making restitution, though the will may be accepted instead of the deed, yet surely you ought to *mourn* with peculiar bitterness that you have done injuries to others, which you are not able to repair. You should reflect on the hand of God, and acknowledge his justice, in rendering your unrighteousness so *unprofitable* to you; and remember that the obligation *still lies upon you* to make restitution when, and in what degree soever you are capable. If the fear of shame and loss of reputation, deter you from this instance of justice; choose some faithful friend to restore the owner his right, and then your name need not be known, or your character sullied; and let it be observed, that to sin, is shame; what shame can it be to do that which is *good*, and undo that which is *evil?* But if your foolish shame or base covetousness prevent your execution of justice;

remember that it will not be long before your iniquities will be charged upon you in the presence of GOD, of angels and men; and what unspeakable shame and confusion will then cover your face, when it shall be found that after all the remonstrances of reason and conscience, you have *lived* and *died in these sins.* If it be objected, that the persons are *dead* whom you have injured, and you know of none to make restitution to; I answer, the *heirs* or *executors* of the deceased have the proper claim to it; and if after diligent enquiry they are not to be found, the divine records have prescribed who are to be the receivers. "If the *injured* man have no kinsman, *or heir*, to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed to the Lord." Numb. v. 3. GOD's *church* and *poor* are his receivers of all estates forfeited to his honour and government. As giving to the poor is *lending* unto the Lord, where it is an act of benevolence; so it is *paying* unto the Lord what he claims as an act of justice from us.

To conclude: 1. Reflect on your *past conduct* as to this great duty of *justice.* Perhaps your injustice has been so *secretly* managed, that your reputation is not injured by it; but what says conscience? Does

not that remember the *unconscionable* bargains, the faulty wares shuffled off by *deceit* and *falsehood;* the unjust *weights* and *measures* used in trade; or the *oppression* and *unmercifulness* with which it has been conducted. Let *conscience* survey the foregoing particulars, and see wherein you have been guilty; and give it leave to speak, while it acts the part of a friendly monitor, for speak it will, and the more terribly, the longer it is silenced. Shut not your eyes against the light, nor frame any excuses for yourself *now*, that will not stand the test of the *great judgment day.* "Break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by shewing mercy." Dan. iv 27. And seek the divine forgiveness by a sincere *repentance* before GOD, and an humble *faith* in Christ Jesus the Lord, while forgiveness may be had.

2. Let all your actions be regulated by the rules of *justice* for the *time to come;* and reckon nothing really gained, but what you gain honestly. Be advised ever to *take the safer path* in doubtful cases; do that which appears to be the most honorable, just and charitable; and run not always to the utmost extent of lawfulness, for he that always walks as near to the rivers brink as he can, is in extreme danger

of falling in. Let it be your fixed purpose, by the grace of GOD, that though you may not be very rich, yet you will be always very *just*. This is the way to a quiet conscience, and a firm estate; you may then enjoy with pleasure, and leave with comfort to your posterity, whatever acquisitions a diligent hand, and a good GOD has offered you. To which end. 1. Let the *fear of* GOD *rule in your hearts*. Fear of shame may restrain men from many instances of injustice, but nothing less than the religious fear of GOD, will make them universally just and honest. 2. Conquer your *undue love to the world*. A covetous and selfish temper is the grand spring of all injustice and oppression. Men would never expose themselves to the anger of GOD, injure their neighbours, and hazard their reputation for a little gain, if their love to it was not excessive and criminal. 3. *Learn contentment* in your *present* state, and *trust in* GOD *for futurity*. His providence overrules and directs all the conditions of his creatures. *He knows what things we have need of*, and what would be *hurtful* to us, and will be sure to secure the best good to those who place their confidence in Him. But men would fain be independent beings. 4. *Love your*

neighbour as yourself, and place yourself *in his stead* in all your dealings with him; it is certain you will then do nothing that is unjust or dishonourable by him. 5. Lastly, as *this* and *every other* virtue and grace must be *derived from* Christ Jesus, the fountain of all wisdom and grace; so let the practice of it be *recommended to* GOD, by a true and living faith in him as the great Mediator. Then whatever your success is here below, you will not fail of an abundant reward above, in the presence and favour of the just and righteous GOD. But let no man be so vain as to think, that the christian *faith* and *profession* will profit him that contradicts the precepts of it: or that the *righteousness of Christ* was ever designed to justify or save the *unrighteous* dealer.

8. *Promote this justice in others*, as far as you are able. Recommend and instil principles of justice and integrity into your *children* and *servants*; and suffer them not to offer the least wrong to any. Be, and profess yourself to be, an enemy to all *injurious* and *deceitful dealing*. Stand not by patiently, while *others* are injured and imposed upon; at least be not partakers with them. In many instances, he that *hinders not* an injury when he might,

makes it *his own.* Improve the interest and influence you have, to reform what is amiss in this respect. This is the way to honour the gospel, and stop the calumnies of its enemies, to establish a good reputation among men; to live in peace, and die in comfort (through the grace of the Redeemer) and leave a blessing behind you. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

OF TRUTH.

AS to the *nature of truth*, we may observe that it is either the agreement of our expressions to the *nature* of things, or to our *knowledge*, or *apprehensions* of them. Our expressions may agree with our conceptions of things, but not with their nature; in which case we call the falsehood a *mistake* or *error*. This is indeed a soft term, and implies but little blame; yet even this is culpable, when the means of knowledge are afforded us; for that law that requires us to *do* our duty, requires a care to *inform* ourselves about it in order thereto. On the other hand, if our *expressions* do not agree with our conceptions, it is *lying*; though they may happen to agree with the nature of the thing. For here is a design to *misrepresent* it: and as our words are understood to express more immediately our own conceptions, here is in fact an intended false representation. Whatever the thing is, we design another should believe we think it to be what we really imagine

it is not. This however is not the case when we only rehearse a lie in an *historical* manner, and make it not our own. And I must observe here, that persons may *act* as well as speak a lie; for words are but the mode of expressing our apprehensions, which may as strongly be signified by actions; for instance, "the man that lives as if he had the estate he knows he has not; or was what indeed he knows he is not, doth as truly lie, as if he was continually to express it by words; if it be done with a design to injure and deceive others."* So that you may perceive that every *mistake* is not a lie, nor every *doubtful speech*, nor every *parable* or *fable*, nor the *rehearsing* of a lie, if we make it not our own: but a *lie*, is the *voluntary falsifying* of the truth, and is usually joined with an *intention to deceive*.

Let every Tradesman endeavour to judge of things *as they are;* and speak of them, when he is properly called thereto, *according to* such his judgment: Neither adding nor diminishing; neither depreciating a commodity, nor putting false colours upon it, but "speak the truth in his heart:" Psal. xv. 2. And this from conscience to God and a love to virtue. To this he is bound

* See Religion of Nature delineated.

by the rules of *reason* and *religion*, of *honour* and *interest*.

1. As every man requires to be *truly* dealt with himself, and hates to be deceived, or imposed upon by falsehood; *reason* evinces the fitness and obligation of treating *others* in the same manner. For with what face can we desire that all men should act by the rules of sincerity and truth to us, while we make falsehood and fraud the measure of our conduct to them? If *truth* is eligible from others *to you*, why should it not be equally so *from you* to them? It is manifest that all civil society must be dissolved without it; that falsehood breaks the bonds, and destroys the confidence that is necessary thereunto; for how can men converse or trade together, if they are not to be *believed*? And how can they expect to be believed, unless they *constantly speak the truth*? He that will *lie* for one thing, at one time, may reasonably be supposed capable of doing it at any time, or in any case. It may further be observed that truth and justice have such a relation to each other, that he cannot be *just* in his dealings, that is *false* in his words. Surely every one's indignation should be awakened against a vice which thus destroys the common good of man-

kind: It is evident that speech was given us, that we might signify or express our minds to each other; but lying and falsehood, directly contradict this end; so that a *dumb* man is better than a *liar*.

2. *Religion* certainly lays us under the strongest obligations to truth and sincerity. We worship and serve the God of *Truth;* the revelation we believe, is the gospel of *Truth;* the precepts of religion every where enforce the love and practice of *Truth;* it is the very character of all that sincerely profess it, that they *hate lying* and *love truth*. Psal. xv. 2, 4. And so contrary is the indulgence of *falsehood* and *deceit* to the spirit of our holy religion, that it utterly excludes the practisers of it from any share in the blessings of the gospel, or hopes of salvation. Prov. xiii. 5. Prov. xix. 9. Psalm v. 6. Rev. xxi. 8, 27. Chap. xxii. 15. Yea, there is such an evident contradiction between a *false* man, and a true christian, that it is a wonder how any can make pretensions to the last character, whose conduct lays them under the censure of the former.

3. And not only reason and religion, but *honour* and *interest* should engage men to be exactly *true* and upright in their words.

There is a real nobleness of spirit, and true courage, in speaking the truth. How strongly doth conscience support the man of veracity, so that no frowns can daunt him? Whereas the *liar* is the reproach of humanity; and the most distant imputation of so infamous a character, is highly resented by every man of honour. He who knows himself to be guilty, feels a sting in his conscience, when none else can accuse him; and shame and confusion fill his face when he is detected. Nothing but sordid hopes, or sordid fears, can prevent the tongue from being the true interpreter of the mind. Thus does *honour* plead for it; and certainly it is not less for a man's *interest* to be *true* to his word. It is the most effectual way to maintain and support his credit. Such a person shall be believed in doubtful things, when a solemn oath is not sufficient to gain him credit, who allows himself in lying and deceit. When men of falsehood and deceit have affrighted those that know them from dealing with them, they will find that justice and truth are greater recommendations, than the fairest sign they can hang out.

Three *excuses* are usually made for this base sin of *lying*.

Some plead the *examples* of others.

They see it daily practised, and find some instances of good men failing in this way; and therefore think they may safely venture upon it. It must indeed be allowed, though it is a sad truth, that multitudes who even call themselves by the honourable name of *christians*, are guilty herein; but by the same plea treason against the king would become allowable, if the number of rebels was great; and the more contempt is cast upon GOD and his government, so much the greater sanction men would have for rebellion against him; and every addition to the number of iniquities, would lessen our obligations to obedience. Who is there that sees not the fallacy of such a plea? Can you think that the number of *guilty* worms of the earth, will be any screen from the resentments of GOD's infinite power and justice? or that he will forbear to vindicate the honour of his laws, because transgressors are multiplied; when this is the very reason that makes *vengeance* necessary to be inflicted? Try whether it will reconcile you to the anguish, and minister consolation amidst the flames of hell, that multitudes of the "wicked, and the nations of those that forget GOD, Psal. ix. 17. shall be turned into it," before you plead *numbers* as a

prescription for iniquity. As to the failings of *good* men this way, they should be subjects of *caution* to us, and not of imitation; they shew us the frailty of human nature, and the necessity of constant watchfulness over ourselves; and let it be observed, that in the several scripture examples of falsehood, it was usually produced by *fear*, and never contrived for *gain*, as in the cases of *Abraham*, *David*, *Peter*, &c. And yet no doubt, even for these their souls were deeply humbled. But what are these *unusual* cases to you, who make a *common practice* of this vice? Do you think the omniscient GOD knows not how to discern the disallowed, unrepeated weakness of an *upright* heart, from the perverse and wilful disobedience of a *vicious* mind? When you are thus encouraging yourselves herein by scripture examples, omit not the cases of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, who both ended their lives with a *lie*, Acts v.

Another *excuse* is, the *smallness* of the sin. *Lying*, say they, is not swearing, nor killing nor stealing: there can be no great harm *in it*, for we do no great hurt *by it*; to which it may be replied, that the sin cannot be *little*, which renders men most unlike to the GOD of truth, and most like

the devil, the *father of lies;* that affronts the authority of heaven, and disturbs the peace of society, and which the good GOD sees fit to punish with such bitter destruction. But if *lying* were indeed so *small* a crime as men would persuade themselves it is, how many little rents can you contentedly bear in your garments? or how many little motes in your eye? or little incisions in your flesh? And is every little injury worthy your watchfulness and care; but those which concern the honour of GOD, and the rectitude and happiness of your own souls? the only things that merit any great concern. But the *smallness* of the sin you plead as an excuse, is really an aggravation of repeated crimes; if you think it too much to part with little sins in obedience to the blessed GOD; how can it be supposed you are willing to part with greater? Surely, he that will not deny a lust to please his GOD and Saviour, will never lay down his life or part with his possessions for him, when that becomes his duty. The habitual indulgence of little sins, are *more aggravated* than the commission of greater, through the hurries and surprise of temptation; because they evidence less love to GOD, and less concern to please him.

Others would *excuse* themselves, by saying, *necessity compels them to it*, there is *no trading* without lying, customers are so *humorsome*, that they make deceit and falsehood necessary. A sad case indeed if true! That the lawful callings of life, cannot be exercised with truth, and a good conscience; and that the righteous Governor of the universe has placed men in such situations of life, as make affronts to his Majesty, and violations of their own consciences, necessary to their subsistence! We may then with great propriety write upon every Tradesman's door, as in times of pestilence; *The Lord have mercy upon them;* and confine honour and integrity, religion and salvation, to the nobility and gentry. But who can look on such a representation of things, without discerning the *fallacy* of it, and being confounded at the *base reflections* that are thereby cast on the GOD of truth and goodness! Canst thou indeed lift up thy face to heaven, and say, *Lord* GOD *of heaven and earth, thou knowest, that from a sincere concern to please Thee, and with a steady trust in thy good providence, I have long confined myself to a strict regard to truth in all my words and dealings; and I appeal to Thee, that I did not forsake the rules of truth, until I found*

poverty and ruin coming upon me, which I could not in any other way prevent. Canst thou who pleadest *necessity* for lying, in thy conscience say, that this has been thy practice, and is now thy experience? If not, be ashamed ever to make such a plea more, until thou hast a better foundation for it. But this excuse appears still more vain, from the strict regard that is paid to truth and veracity by persons in your *own callings*, or at least in callings equally exposed to temptations of this kind; of which hundreds may be found, who yet gain sufficiently by them. I have been the larger upon this, because the same answers will serve to confute most of those vain pleas which men make to silence the conviction of their own minds, and encourage themselves in vice and immorality.

We proceed to consider *wherein truth is to be exercised.* It is not to be strained so far as to oblige the Tradesman always to declare *the whole* of what he knows: neither the price that his goods *cost* him; nor *where* or *how* he is furnished with them; nor where his customers may be served *cheaper*; or any of the *lawful secrets* of his business, which might tend to his prejudice? For though we may not lie upon the watch to deceive and over-

reach others, we may stand upon our guard, and not betray or injure ourselves. But,

1st. This *truth* obliges to the performance of *all lawful contracts and promises.* Prudence will direct you to be cautious what promises you make, and what engagements you enter into, that they are equitable and convenient, as well as lawful and possible. But when your word is past, though they may be *difficult*, and *prejudicial* to perform; and none may be *witnesses* to your promises and contracts, yet GOD and conscience require you to make them good, unless the party concerned is willing to release you. For these are the bonds of human society, which being dissolved, men can neither securely trust or *trade* with each other. The righteous man though "he sweareth to his own hurt, changeth not." Psal. xv. Who, indeed, can proceed with comfort or safety in business, that depends upon *faithless* men, who neither regard what they say nor what they promise? And it must be added here, that a promise or contract made by a *servant* whom you are used to trust, is equally binding as if made by yourself; for if you would adhere to his contract if it was advantageous, you ought not to

recede from it, though it be prejudicial. Indeed if you are imposed upon in the *substance* of the thing agreed for, as copper lace for gold, or the like, the contract is void in itself; for there was no consent, which is necessary in a bargain; the vender sold one thing, and the buyer purchased or agreed for another.

This *truth* likewise requires workmen and others, to perform their engagements in the *time* and *manner* they have promised; which is what too many pay little regard unto. The common excuse is, something came in to hinder, other work in more haste, or of more profit, or the like: I answer, your promises then should be *conditional*, and such as the employer will admit of, or else you may wrong him to profit yourselves, and please others; and in cases of unavoidable necessity, apply your self to the person, and endeavour to satisfy him, if you would preserve a good conscience, and a fair character: and be cautious in all cases of making *hasty* promises.

Again, they deviate from *truth* and justice, who agree for a commodity, but the price falling, or some other contingence happening, never come for it, or refuse to have it. And others, who promise to pay

their bills or debts on such a day, but when the time comes, there is no money, nor perhaps any message to ask longer time. These omissions, though only made through negligence, or such like causes, are nevertheless very culpable; as society is thereby disordered, and conscience violated.

2. The business of concealing material faults in any commodity has been considered under the head of justice; but if you have any other cause to know that the bargain will turn considerably to the disadvantage of your customer, and the forbearing of it will not be an equal prejudice to you; the *royal law* of love and equity, obliges you to give him warning of it. By the same rule, you ought not to pay *coin* that is *defective* in goodness or value, but plainly tell them your suspicion of it; for otherwise you *deceive* them in deeds, if not in words: and you will find it an unsound conclusion at last, that you have a right to impose upon others, because others have imposed upon you.

3d. *Truth* is to be shewn by *forbearing all unjust commendations* of your goods; either as to quality or price. If you do this ignorantly it is culpable, because you ought to *hesitate* about that which you are

uncertain of: but if you know they do not deserve commendation, or at least, so much as you bestow upon them; it is a manifest breach of *truth*, and justice. For instance, to pretend that a commodity is of *one kind* or *country*, when it is of another. That it is *faultless*, when the faults are only covered. That it was made by such an *esteemed* workman, and cost such a *price*; when it is neither one, nor the other. That it is *new*, or the *newest fashioned*, when it is manifestly old. Or that you have *refused so much* money for it, when you know it was never offered to you. These and such like *falsehoods*, which Tradesmen often indulge themselves in, must certainly proceed from an hardened heart, and a seared conscience. It is incredible that men who profess to believe an *omniscient* GOD, and a *future judgment* of final retribution, should dare from day to day, to tell an hundred lies, to gain as many pence; and damn their souls, to obtain that which they would not refuse to expend the next moment upon their dogs. I beseech thee, friend, pretend no more to religion or conscience; especially, dishonour not the *christian* name by falsely assuming that to thyself, but own thyself to be what indeed thou art, an *atheist* or an

infidel; or else reform thy practice, and resolve, by the help of GOD, that if *truth* will not maintain you, *falsehood* never shall. For "the getting treasures by a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro only of them that seek death." Prov. xxi. 9.

4th. This *truth* also forbids *all unjust disparagement* of persons and things. It is too common for the buyer to say, *it is naught, it is naught,* who when he goeth his way *rejoiceth.* But the gain that is got by such artifices, is far from balancing the guilt that is contracted thereby; and their tongues give the lie to their consciences. Forge not therefore *causeless exceptions;* things that are manifestly good or cheap, allow them so to be; otherwise you disparage your own judgments or sincerity, more than the goods which you discommend. Things that are evidently faulty or dear, may be plainly, yet modestly, complained of. And those that are doubtful, should only be spoken doubtfully of. And let the same caution and tenderness be extended to your *fellow Tradesmen;* discommend not his character or goods without cause, from any selfish or malicious views. Remember that your tongues are not your own, to enhance or depress what you please; but that you are as accountable to

GOD for your *words*, Matt. xii. 36. as for your actions: and the less sins of this nature fall under the notice of human laws, so much the more obnoxious they are to the infinite justice of GOD.

5th. *Truth* excludes *all equivocations and disguises* in our dealings with others. The design of speech, is to signify our minds to each other; but when it is clouded with *ambiguities*, and mental *reservations*, with a design to deceive, the end is frustrated, our neighbour is imposed upon, and our words are no better than *painted lies*. Your expressions are, perhaps, in one sense true, but false in another, in which you believe the person you speak to will take them, and in which you design that he should: or you speak out so much as may deceive others, and reserve so much in your own mind, as added to the rest, would contradict what you offer as truth. But as the thief *disguised*, is as hateful and dangerous, as he that is open; so all such *sophistical* dealing, is as contrary to truth and integrity, as plainer falsehoods, and should be as much detested. It is true, we are not always obliged to tell *all* we know, and some disguises may be allowed, when an impertinent curiosity, or a designing craft, would extort from us truths which we are

not bound to discover; but the upright Tradesman, as he should be a *wise* man, so he will usually be a *plain* one; and speak as he thinks, and act as he speaks. For it has too strong a tincture of knavery, when our speech, like *Apollo's* oracles, may be understood in a fair, or a fatal sense. None are pleased with such deceitful dealing to themselves, and none should practise it with others.

6th. This *veracity* will restrain *a multiplicity of words* in our trading or converse. These the sacred scripture every where condemns; it censures it as *folly;* "A fool's voice is known by the multitude of words." Eccles. v. 3. "Seest thou a man hasty in his words, there is more hope of a fool than of him." Prov. xxix. 20. It condemns it as *Sin;* "In the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin." Prov. x. 19. An yet what a *flood of words* are poured out about the smallest traffic? The seller commonly asketh unreasonably high, while the buyer as commonly offers unreasonably low; and a long controversy there is before they come together: the one affirming, he will give *no more*, and the other as positively saying, he will take *no less;* and both receding from their words before they have done. Though it is confessed,

that every alteration of mind is not a *lie*, and men may see cause in buying and selling so to do; yet when these positive declarations are made, without the design of adhering to them, which I believe is usually the case, I cannot see how the minds of men can acquit them from the charge of *falsehood*. Sure I am, if *covetousness* did not bias men on one side, and *injustice* on the other, business might be dispatched in two words, as well as two hundred. Let the Tradesman therefore be persuaded to content himself with a reasonable profit; in small things to fix his price *at once*, and in greater to come *as near* to the mark as may be; if he would transact his business with ease and pleasure, establish a good reputation, and secure a good conscience. A little resolution and practice, will make this method easy; it has been practised by many with good success; and I am satisfied, that none who ever used themselves to this way, from a principle of integrity and justice, had ever cause to repent it.

7th. *Truth* certainly obliges men to be *cautious in making*, and *careful in keeping oaths and covenants*. Perjury, common as it is, is almost as great a crime as men are capable of committing: It is a *defiance* of the GOD of heaven, to whom the appeal is

made; it proclaims the person who can be guilty of it, destitute of the *fear* of GOD, or *regard to men*; and is utterly destructive to all *human society*. For what bonds can hold that man that *sacred oaths* will not? There cannot possibly be any security in civil order or government, where these are broken through, and violated. It is no breach of charity to suppose that person capable of all imaginary evil, who can allow himself to be guilty of *perjury* and *perfidiousness*. And as it is exceeding evil in its nature, it is no less so in its consequences, bringing down the *judgments of* GOD on nations, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 3. Jer. xxiii. 10, families, Zech. v. 3, 4, and persons. Eze. xvii. 15, 20. And being the seed of self tormenting desperation to those who commit it. Even the *heathens* thought that man and his family *destined to destruction*, that was guilty of it. And yet, how does this nation groan under the weight of this evil? What numberless *perjuries* are continually committed, to the horror and amazement of all considerate minds? Arising no doubt, in some degree, from the number of unnecessary, impossible oaths, which are forced upon men, on various occasions. An evil, which it were to be wished the legislature would attend

to, as none else can provide a remedy for it.

Upon the whole, how *absurd* and *foolish* a part do they act, who expose themselves to the just resentment of heaven, violate their own consciences, and prostitute their reputations, by *deceit* and *falsehood*, to gain that which might more effectually be secured by truth and integrity? And which when it is obtained by such means, can afford no true satisfaction! The GOD of truth can never bestow *his blessing* upon it; that were to give a sanction to the rebellion of his creatures against himself, and to smile on what his soul abhors; and what real comfort or good can men expect from their acquisitions without this? Does wealth when gotten render men independent on GOD, and raise them above the strokes of his just providence? Cannot he send sickness and losses, blast their designs, and frustrate all their schemes for wealth and happiness; and "cause them to labour in the very fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?" Hab. ii. 13. And after they have spent a life of sorrow and disappointment here, banish them into hell. Or if he should, in just judgment, permit a *lying* tongue to be successful; can the wealth gained thereby be considered in any

other light, than as a *dead weight* to sink them the deeper into perdition? Where is men's wisdom or sagacity? Where is their love to themselves, in pursuing a course attended with such evil consequences? If you value therefore your *external* credit; if you value your *internal* comfort, or your *eternal* happiness; banish from you *lying lips.* Let *truth* and *integrity* rule in your shops; let them rule in your hearts; and be your constant attendants in every business and company. Recommend them to your children, and charge them upon your servants; for if you permit them to *lie* for your advantage, they will not scruple to do it to your prejudice. And wherever you have been defective in regard to truth, shew the sincerity of your concern for it by sincere repentance and universal reformation. To which end,

1. *Subdue covetousness.* He that loveth money better than GOD and conscience, will for money displease GOD and conscience, by this or any other sin. Covetousness is the root of falsehood, and many other vices. 2. Learn to *trust* GOD and his *providence*, in the way of duty. This will set you above every mean and unworthy artifice; for he that believes and considers that he depends upon GOD for all

things, will easily perceive that the practice of virtue, and not of vice, is the means to be blessed by him. 3. Preserve upon your minds a continual *apprehension* of the exceeding *baseness* and *evil of lying*. Men would not so readily commit sins of any kind, if their consciences were not stupid and insensible of the evil nature of them. 4. Let the *presence* of GOD be a curb to you, whenever you are tempted to this sin. Surely none can dare to tell a deliberate untruth, who seriously considers himself in the continual presence of the GOD of truth. How can those lift up their faces with comfort to Him in prayer at night, who have thus affronted His truth and omniscience in the day. 5. Especially, seek to GOD for his *renewing* and *sanctifying grace*, and labour to attain an holy frame of mind. It is a vain attempt to purify the streams of vice, while the fountain of iniquity, a corrupt nature, remains in all its vigour. But when that is cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit of GOD; then only will the issues from it be pure and acceptable. "A renewed conscience, is the great preservative from all evil."

Thus I have set before you, the nature and necessity of venerable *truth*, and

endeavoured to excite you to the pratice of it; what impression it has made upon your hearts, GOD only knows; but this I must say, that if these arguments prevail not with you, GOD has one which will do so effectually, for he hath said, "that the mouth of them that speak lies, shall be stopped." Psal. xliii. 11.

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal *falsely*, neither *lie* one to another. *Lev.* xix. 11."

CHAP. VII.

OF CONTENTMENT.

CONTENTMENT, as it relates to this subject, is a *cheerful satisfaction* in the place and calling wherein GOD hath set us. As there is a *natural stupidity* in some persons; so there is a *stoical pride* in others, who would endeavour to appear indifferent in every state and circumstance of life, from an obstinate and self sufficient temper of mind: but *christian contentment* is a more noble thing, arising from a becoming sense of GOD's dominion over us, as our Lord and owner, who may therefore do as he pleases with his own; and an humble trust in him as our Father and friend, whose wisdom and goodness directs every part of his dispensations towards us, the low afflicted situations of life, as well as the more pleasurable and prosperous ones; and these persuasions, by divine grace, enable us "to learn in whatsoever state

we are, therewith to be content." But, alas, where is this amiable virtue to be found? Men are usually *unsatisfied* with their present condition, longing after some *change* or *alteration*, which when they have attained, they are as far from happiness as they were before.* The child or servant, weary of restraint, longs for the liberty of the parent or master. The parent or master, weary of his cares and troubles, wishes for retirement and ease. The unmarried are not contented with their condition; and the married often less with theirs. The poor envy the plenty of the rich; and the rich admire the quiet and health of the poor. Nor is the Tradesman free from this restless distemper; often preferring, not only the gown or the sword, but this or the other trade before his own: and indeed, ever since our father *Adam* grew dissatisfied with the delights of paradise, all his posterity are infected with the same unhappy disease, until the grace

* Our very wishes give us not our wish,
How distant, oft the thing we doat on most,
From that for which we doat. *Felicity*
Loose then from earth, the grasp of fond desire,
Weigh anchor; and some happier clime explore.
Night Thoughts.

of GOD renews their natures, limits their desires, and shews them a more durable, and substantial good, than the pleasures of time, or the acquisitions of honour or wealth can bestow, even the favour and enjoyment of his great and blessed self.

Let us consider some *instances* wherein the Tradesman is called to the exercise of this virtue of *contentment*. And,

1st. In cheerfully undergoing *the inconveniencies and difficulties* of his calling. There are some inconveniencies in a trading life in general; and indeed no condition in life is free from them. One is, that the Tradesman is subject to *a dependance upon many persons*. If it is a mechanic business, it usually depends on many *masters*; if it consists in commerce, on many *workmen*, and many *customers*; some fantastical, some penurious or imperious, others inconstant or idle: which are real exercises of patience to those employed in trade. Another inconvenience the Tradesman often meets with, is *bad servants*. These are idle, careless, unfaithful or vicious. No sooner is his back turned, but his business is neglected, his customers slighted, or his goods embezzled, and he loses more at home, than with all his care

he can get abroad. And then, the Tradesman's business usually lies among *all sorts* of men, from whom he meets with disappointment and falsehood in some, treachery and fraud in others. Besides these, there are *particular* inconveniencies that relate to several employments; some of which require hard labour; others continual care; sometimes being overdone with business, at other times having nothing to do. These things meeting with a *discontented* spirit, make it inwardly to broil, or outwardly to flame: and the man cries out, who would lead such a life? Never was man thus perplexed; this vexation is never to be endured; no man was ever such a slave; and the like. And seeing he cannot reform others, he torments himself, and can take no rest, and expatiates largely on the miseries of a trade.

But who art thou, O man, that thou shouldest think to be exempted from the *common lot* of mankind? Canst thou expect that a *new world* should be created to give thee satisfaction? Or that the tempers and manners of men should be changed, from what they *always were?* Why should we think to find men without infirmities, who are conscious of so many *in ourselves?* Or

hope to ride through the storms of life, without being *tossed* by its waves? Does it not better become us to *possess our souls in patience*, and resolve, that as we cannot make others better, we will be watchful that they do not make us worse, and increase the unavoidable difficulties of life, by fretfulness and impatience; to consider ourselves, as placed by divine providence, on this theatre of action, *to exercise* our wisdom, patience and humility, in order to prepare us for a better state, and make the enjoyment of it more delightful to us.

2. Let *contentment* be shewn in a *thankful acknowledgment of the several advantages* of your callings: *for* GOD *hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him;* that is, no just cause to complain of his proceedings. The Tradesman's calling, is usually more *comfortable for the body*, than that of many others. You have, for the most part, less toil than the husbandman, and less danger than the seaman or the soldier; and are not exposed to the inclemencies of the weather, and other inconveniencies which many undergo, to support yourselves and families. You are seldom kept from sleep by the aches of

your bones in daily labour; nor will you be content with the fare and apparel of the poor labourer. You know best how it is *within*, but one may easily perceive by your *outward* appearance, that you have every way the advantage; and therefore should be *contented* and *thankful*. And then, your calling is more *friendly to the mind*. You have usually a more liberal education, than labouring persons; and are fixed early in life in families, and among persons where you have opportunities to cultivate and improve your *understandings*. In many trades there is time and leisure, wherein by reading and conversation, you may gain that wisdom and knowledge, which may *adorn* your minds, and capacitate you for more *extensive usefulness*, *pleasure* and *happiness*. You have generally greater advantages for your *eternal interest* than others. You are often placed where the word of GOD is preached; the sacred scripture, and other books of instruction put into your hands; the examples of religion and virtue before your eyes; and every help afforded you that can be desired, for the making you wiser and better. Whereas the situations of many others are *very distant* from the

means of knowledge, and *very unfriendly* to the aids of religion, either as to hearing or converse. And, for *temporal advantages*, yours far exceed the common lot of multitudes. If GOD is pleased to add his blessing to your diligence, you *enjoy more* of the comforts of life, and are capable of making *better provision* for your families when you die and leave them. If others can procure plain food and clothing, and a place to cover their heads; if they can teach their children to read and write, and then advance them to some of *your services*, it is the highest of their ambition. And lastly, the *Tradesman* has often greater opportunities of *doing good* than many others; which is man's greatest honour and happiness, next to the beatific vision. You have the opportunity to *educate* and *instruct* those youths that are under your charge; and by counsel and example, to direct them in the paths of religion and virtue; whereby those principles and habits may be implanted in them, (through the grace of GOD) which may make them happy in future life, and blessings to all around them. In divers trades, many *poor are employed;* whose loins, by mercy and goodness, you may cause to bless you;

and, if GOD prospers your undertakings, you are capable of considerable service to the great *interests of religion*, and the *good of the community* to which you relate. And it must be said in honour to the *trading* world, that most of the noblest charities now existing, owe their foundations, or their continuance, to the benevolence of this useful and important part of mankind.

But then, the *Tradesman* should also consider with *thankfulness* the advantages of *his own* particular calling; for every calling has advantages, as well as inconveniencies, peculiar to itself. If it be laborious, it is usually more free from *cares*, and less subject to *losses:* if it consists in commerce, or buying and selling only, you have commonly *more time*, and *less toil:* if it is hazardous, it is generally *more gainful* than others: in some callings, you become acquainted with the beauties of *nature;* in others, with the curiosities of *art*. These, and the like advantages, should be *observed* by the Tradesman, and then he will conclude, "I am very happily situated, if I did but know it; and instead of envying the condition of others, or repining at

my own, I only need a more thankful spirit for the blessings I enjoy."

3d. Let *contentment* be exercised, by a *cheerful patience under losses and disappointments* in trade. Here the Tradesman often finds employment for all his patience and virtue. Sometimes his losses are great, by the *corruptible nature* of the goods he deals in: at other times, chapmen and correspondents *fail;* or storms and tempests make *great devastations* in his substance; and it is not little that many suffer, by the *frequent changes* of the fashions. These, and the like occurrences, fill the *discontented* mind with uneasiness and confusion; the man falls out with his business; condemns all mankind, because some are dishonest; and, I fear, too often frets at divine providence, if he is not ready to deny it, because it does not favour his designs; and thus, he neither enjoys the comfort, nor gives to GOD the praise of what he possesses, because he has not all that he desired.

But christian *contentment*, though it is not insensible of losses, labours to *digest* them; and if things are bad, will not make them worse by *despondency*, or the neglect of *proper duty*. The good man

knows, that constant happiness is no where to be found but in GOD, and the testimony of a good conscience; and is sensible that afflictive providences, as well as prosperous ones, flow from the *wisdom* and *goodness* of his heavenly Father; and that the more humble and submissive he lies under his losses, the *sooner* they are likely to be made up to him. Though he suffers by the breaking of others, yet he is thankful to GOD that *he himself* is not the bankrupt; and is ready, if he finds no treachery in the case, to *compassionate* those who labour under that affliction.

4th. *Contentment* is to be employed *in watching against those vices which are contrary to it.* Among which are these,

1. *Ambition;* which is for aiming at things out of the Tradesman's sphere, making him restless and uneasy in his present condition, because his mind is too high for his calling, or his success unequal to his desires; and the shoe is uneasy, because the foot is swelled. This distemper ruined our *first* parents, and has been of fatal consequence to *many* of their posterity. Many a Tradesman by a foolish ambition, has engaged in enterprises which have deprived him of the comfort-

able subsistence he before enjoyed. Persons, indeed, may allowably endeavour to raise themselves, as far as the sober improvement of their time and capacities will admit of, but those desires and pursuits are certainly criminal, which render them *discontented* and *unthankful* for their present enjoyments, which *obstruct* the love and duty they owe to GOD, and their neighbour; and have only the motives of *pride* and *fancy*, instead of the desires of benevolence and charity for their foundation.

2. *Envy;* when men indulge an *envious* disposition at the prosperity of others. There is one, says *discontent*, less deserving than I, in more credit; another less diligent, but more successful: there are others, who live without care or pains, and yet riches flow in upon them, and they have all that heart can wish. Sure the world is very unequally divided, that we must have labour and disappointment, and they wealth and ease. See, says *envy*, what a fine house, what rich furniture, what a flowing trade, and the like, such and such enjoy. And what is all this to thee? "Is thine eye evil, because GOD is good?" A little more modesty would teach you, that the Governor of the uni-

verse, knows best where to bestow his gifts. Alas! he sees that thy neighbour's high estate, and thy high spirit would undo thee. He knows what is fittest both for him and thee, and therefore be content to be at His disposal. The necessaries of this, and hopes of a better life, is *happiness enough* for you, if you are interested in the favour of the GOD of heaven; but it is too much, if you are disobedient subjects to GOD; while therefore you have more than *you deserve*, repine not at what *others possess*. But as to those you *envy*, you know not the burdens they feel; you see their *seeming* happiness, but not their *real* misery; and are little sensible of the *cares*, and fears, and sorrows, which are the attendants upon a splendid state; as well as the powerful temptations to pride, sensuality, and forgetfulness of GOD, which their prosperous condition exposes them to. So that they are rather the objects of your compassion, than of your emulation. "Be not, *therefore*, disturbed when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased." Psal. xlix. 16. For he that rejoiceth at the prosperity of others, makes it *his own;* but he that en-

vies it, deprives himself of the comfort of what *he possesses.*

3. *Covetousness* is another vice, repugnant to contentment. By covetousness, I mean *an insatiable desire of riches;* when men will be rich, or else think they cannot be happy. This restless desire, when it is indulged in the Tradesman's heart, perpetually torments him; and he can enjoy no satisfaction in what he *hath*, through his eager desire after *more.* This causes him to fret at every little loss, and fills him with anguish at every disappointment; he denies himself conveniencies, cuts short his family of necessaries, neglects the poor, and destroys his soul, to *get money;* and his desires of wealth are like the thirst of a fever, the more he *drinks*, the more he *longs.* But how unbecoming is this of a reasonable creature? Riches neither make men more wise, happy, or good; and are no further desirable, than they are procured with a good conscience, and employed to good purposes. And is benificence and charity, the real end of your desires after them? Judge of your sincerity herein, by the use you make of your *present* acquisitions; for *he that is unfaithful in a little, will be unfaithful also in much*, and

no man can be a good steward of *many* talents, who does not wisely employ a few. If you dare not trust GOD in a charitable and pious use of what you possess, the pride and pleasures of life, or the increasing love of money, will render you as fruitless of good works in larger acquisitions of wealth. I know men aim at *satisfaction*, but this is not to be obtained by enlarging their estates, but by contracting their desires; for "he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase." Eccles. v. 10. And the word of truth, as well as constant experience, assure us, that, "the happiness of man's life, does not consist in the abundance which he possesses." Luke xii. 15. Therefore, "if riches increase, set not your heart upon them;" or if they decrease, break not your heart for them; but rather imitate the example of the good man, who said, "I take GOD to witness to my conscience, I desire of GOD, to myself, no more in this world, than that without which I cannot keep His laws."

4. *Despondency* and *dejection of mind*, is another evil contrary to *contentment*. This commonly seizes the Tradesman when *business is dead*. He furnishes his shop with

goods, but finds few customers. He seeks and waits for trade, but little comes. Others with pains and cost prepare their work, but know not where or how to dispose of it. Debts are contracted, but little comes in to discharge them; the necessary expenses of their houses and families, are constant and unavoidable; and sometimes his future prospects are more formidable than his present discouragements; and he sees not that either care or industry can relieve him. These things sink the Tradesman's spirits, and he is ready to give up *all hopes*, and put an end to all endeavours to mend his condition. Amidst these fears and gloomy apprehensions, let the religious Tradesman resolutely persevere in diligence, frugality, and every necessary self denial; let him use every expedient which prudence may suggest, and conscience approve; and in this course let him strengthen his mind by a steady trust in the divine promises and providence; and assuredly believe, that all things are ordered by GOD in perfect wisdom and goodness; who *will never leave nor forsake* those that fear and trust in Him; and though he sometimes brings good men low, *to humble and* to *prove them*,

and teach them their dependence upon Him, yet it is always with a design of *doing them good* in the latter end. The fountain of being and happiness, can easily make up in spiritual blessings, the absence of any temporal good; and in the most proper time and way, supply your needs, and exceed your desires. Rouse up therefore your fainting spirits, attend still upon your callings, and ease your minds of anxiety and care, by a confirmed trust in GOD. "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. Psal. ix. 10. "*Therefore*, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" &c. Matt. vi. 25—34.

5. Lastly, *Invading others callings* is contrary to this *contentment*. Diligence and contentment are no enemies to each other; but when persons endeavour to grasp at all the business in their own callings, or to invade those of others, merely to increase their riches; it is too plain an

indication of a covetous disposition. In some cases, indeed, it may be allowable for one person to engage in two or three callings; but then a *just necessity*, and not an avaricious desire of wealth, must oblige you to it. In some cases and situations, one trade not being sufficient for a comfortable subsistence. Then, they must not be *inconsistent with* each other. If the one hinder the other, or both together disturb and hinder you from other indispensable duties to GOD or man, they are to be esteemed and avoided as snares. And further, you may not follow them to the *prejudice of the common good.* For we are not so to love ourselves, as to exclude all regard to others. Other families may be supported by the trade which you can live well enough without; and the wise and good GOD, who is the common parent of mankind, will be far from approving such selfish and uncharitable enterprises. In like manner also, you should beware of invading *any thing else*, that is proper to your neighbour. If his *house* or *shop* be ever so convenient or advantageous to you, you should neither desire nor endeavour to procure them to yourself, to his prejudice; nor use any method in order thereto,

which you would think unreasonable if the case was your own; but govern yourself by *equity* and *charity*, in every part of your conduct toward others.

5th. *A steady continuance in our callings*, under the several disadvantages of them, is another branch of the Tradesman's *contentment*. There are many who when they meet with some considerable check in their business, or when indolence prevails upon them, are in haste to leave their callings, and engage in some other; and there are others, who are prompted to it by an unstable disposition of mind, which never suffers them to be at rest in any situation of life. But though we may form pleasing chimeras of the advantages attending other employments than our own; yet it will usually be found, that if the calling wherein we have been *educated*, and with which we are *best acquainted*, will not answer our desires; we are not likely to meet with better success in those employments, to the nature and difficulties of which we are *strangers*. And therefore, persons should be very cautious how they undertake a change of this kind; and see that they have a proper knowledge of the nature of their new employment, and suitable abilities for

conducting it, as well as a reasonable prospect of advantage from it. As to each of which, it will be proper to take the opinion of wise and experienced friends.

The inconveniencies arising from the change of a *trade*, often attend the change of *place* or *situation* for carrying it on; a desire of which, many times proceeds from the like unsteady, discontented temper with it to the former, but especially to this latter circumstance that observation of the wisest man may be applied; "as the bird that wandereth from her nest, so is the man that wandereth from his place:" Prov. xxvii. 8. And persons of *Reuben's* character generally meet with his fate; "Unstable as water, he shall not excel." Gen. xlix. 4.

Permit me to *enforce the necessity* and *propriety* of this amiable and happy disposition of *contentment*, by observing that,

1st. The *command of* GOD obliges us to it. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave nor forsake you." Heb. xiii. 5. Than which, no precept can be more *plain*, nor any reason more *powerful*. Observe,

he says, "be content with such things as *ye have;*" it is not what *others* have, that is to be your standard; their steps may be attended with more prosperity, and they may be better fitted to bear it. Nor are they such things as ye *have had*, that are to produce this *contented* disposition; you may have lived higher, and fared better, when younger in life; before the fire consumed your substance, or marriage multiplied your family, and the like; but be content with such things as ye *now* have. Nor is a satisfied mind to be suspended until you acquire such things as you *would* have; say not, had I more trade, less family expenses, a better house, or fewer losses, &c. I should be content; for there is no virtue in being pleased when every thing is to our minds; but be easy, cheerful, and thankful in your *present* condition; and consider yourself as placed therein by divine providence; who may have services for you to do, and blessings for you to receive in that situation, which you know not of. It is GOD that "chuses our inheritance for us." Psal. xlvii. 4. And when he had chosen it shall we enter our dissent, question his goodness, or censure his wisdom?

2d. *Discontent* contradicts the *providential will of* GOD, and *your own prayers;* and is *evil in its causes* and *effects.* The blessed GOD is the Lord of the universe, and the absolute disposer of all persons and things; and we may be assured from the infinite rectitude, wisdom, and goodness of his nature, that none of his dispensations can vary from these amiable perfections, however they may contradict our foolish desires and expectations; and is it reasonable to expect that he should alter the *laws of nature*, and the *designs of his providence*, to satisfy the weak, short sighted wishes of every worm? That which is hurtful to me, may be beneficial to many others; the wind that dashes my ship against the rock, may, at the same time blow two others from off the sands, and what cause have I then to murmur? Do we not confute our *own prayers*, when we say, "Father, thy will be done," and yet repine when he does his will upon us? It either shews our hypocrisy, in praying for what we do not desire; or our folly, in contradicting our own requests.

Many other *evils* attend a *discontented* mind, which should deter us from it. It is evil in its *causes;* as it proceeds from pride

heart, envy, covetousness, distrust of OD, and an unthankful spirit for the bles- ıgs we enjoy. It is evil in its *effects;* it ıfits us for the duties and pleasures of a ligious life. The discontented person is ıolly indisposed for love and delight in OD, for praise and gratitude to him, it *forms* and *disturbs* our own souls; like llocks unaccustomed to the yoke, we gall ırselves the more by struggling against e burden, and deprive ourselves of the ıe enjoyment of the blessings we pos- ss, by repining at the absence of those e desire; and often make our "troubles ıger," Numb. xiv. 27, 33. by preventing ose blessings which an humble, patient sposition, would incline our heavenly ather to bestow upon us.

3d. If you are *christians in truth*, you ve enough to shame all *discontent.* You ve the perfections of GOD; the unsearch- le riches of Christ: the influences of the ly Spirit of GOD: an interest in the pro- ises of the gospel: the divine image on ur own souls: the infallible assurance of l needful good here; and the hope and ospect of consummate blessedness in the e to come, to be your portion and happi- ss. And if these are not sufficient to

content you, I must say, that you shamefully undervalue your high privileges. "Bear thy condition quietly, know that thou art a *man*," says the heathen philosopher; with much more propriety may I say, be contented with thy state, know that thou art a *christian*. Thou professest to live by *faith*, do not act below *reason*.

4th. There is *no condition of life*, how low and mean soever, but in the faithful discharge of the duties of religion, GOD *may be honoured* in it, and by it. Your prudence and piety, your patience, diligence and integrity, may recommend religion, not only to your equals, but to persons in superior stations of life; and those acts of liberality, however small in their kind, that proceed from a heart so full of generous benevolence, animated with piety, that a man is willing to deny himself of many innocent gratifications that he may be able to perform them, is *more regarded*, Luke ii. 1. by the Judge of all, than larger donations from the superfluities of the rich. And it should be considered, for the consolation of the poor, that the *lowest* employments are as necessary for the benefit and comfort of mankind, as those that have a *more splendid*

appearance; as in a well composed building, not the beams and pillars only, but the very pins are necessary to its beauty and strength. Common mechanic trades, often contribute more to the well being of a state, than more polite and genteel employments; these often, at best, only serve to the *ornament* of it, the others are necessary to its *subsistence*. Let this consideration, especially in comparison with the others, make those content, whom providence has placed in the lowest situations of life.

In order to which happy disposition,

1. *Impress upon your minds the reality and importance of a future state.* The man that considers himself only as a short probationer here, for an *eternal* existence; and is conflicting with enemies without, and enemies within, for the life of his soul; will see the absurdity of a solicitude for trifles. Look into the state of your own souls, and you will find so much mercy wanting *for* them; and so much rectitude and goodness wanting *in* them, as will quench your thirst after other things. How deep is the infatuation of sinful man! that he can be so perpetually and anxiously solicitous about momentary and empty

vanities; while the image of GOD is lost in his soul; and the anger of GOD is ready to consume him; and his eternal, unchangeable state depends on the brittle thread of human life, which death may snap in sunder the next hour or moment?

2. *Get an humble spirit*, if you would have a *contented* one. *Pride* causes men to be unthankful for their mercies, and impatient under their crosses; but afflictions are easily borne, and benefits are ever gratefully acknowledged, by the mind that is truly humble under a sense of its defects. I have a poor trade, and mean fare, it is true, says humility; but it is more than I deserve. I might be begging or starving, or pining away in pain and misery. There are others, indeed, who enjoy more, but then I suppose they deserve better; however I am sure I merit nothing, and so may well be contented with a little.

3. *Restrain your fancies*, and *moderate your desires*, if ever you would attain to this happy state of *contentment*. "Nature and grace are contented with little, but pride and humour with nothing." Men's *real* wants are few, and soon supplied; but if our fancies and desires are made the mea-

sure of our necessities, we shall find no end to our *imaginary* wants. The only way to happiness is to bring our mind to our condition, which is in every one's power, by divine assistance; whereas the raising our condition to our mind, is what few can attain; and we find that when men have arrived to that state in which they thought happiness consisted, their minds swell as their wealth increases, and they are as far from *contentment* as ever. So that if our circumstances are moderate, we may as well sit down easy and cheerful now, as then.

4. Lastly, *Live in dependence upon the blessed* GOD, and *place your happiness in his favour;* and then you will easily be *contented* with what the world affords. The soul that lives with GOD, and centers in Him as its felicity, enjoys delights so noble and excellent, that it looks with pity on the deluded world, who are pursuing the empty shadows of earthly happiness, and neglecting the only true substantial good, of a reasonable immortal spirit. He that knows that GOD is *his*, and that all the perfections of GOD are engaged *for his good*, will be very easy and satisfied in

every state of life. Learn, therefore, to be *content* with His allowance, to acquiesce in His providence; believe Him to be both wise and good, to know what is best for you, and willing to bestow it upon you, if you are careful to please Him. He that hath promised glory and happiness in the *end* to those that love and fear Him; will not deny them any real necessary good, in the *way* to it. Live then upon His infallible word and promises, under all discouragements; and you will certainly find that your hope will not make you ashamed.

"Then Job said, *naked* came I out of my mother's womb, and *naked* shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord, *Job* i. 20, 21.

"Job said, what! shall we receive *good* at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive *evil* also? *Job* ii. 10.

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; *fret not thyself* because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; *fret not thyself* in any wise to do evil. For evil doers shall be cut off. But those that wait

upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. A *little* that a righteous man hath, *is better* than the riches of many wicked, *Psal.* xxxvii. 7—9. 16.

" They tempted GOD in their heart, by asking meat for their *lust*. Yea, they spake against GOD. They said, *Can* GOD furnish a table in the wilderness? *Can He* give bread also? *Can He* provide flesh for His people? Therefore the Lord was wroth, and a fire was kindled against Jacob. Because they believed not in GOD, and trusted not in His salvation, *Psal.* lxxviii. 18, 22.

" Better is a *little* with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure, and *trouble* therewith, *Prov.* xv. 16.

" Two things have I required of Thee, deny me not before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither *poverty* nor *riches*, feed me with food convenient for me, *&c.* Prov. xxx. 7, 9.

" Better is the sight of the eyes, than the *wandering* of the desire. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. See there be many things that increase *vanity*, what is man the better *(for them?)* Eccles. vi. 9, 11.

"I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things. Wo unto him that *striveth with* his Maker. Shall the clay say unto him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? *Isā.* xlv. 7, 9.

"He said unto them, take heed and beware of *covetousness;* for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, &c. Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which have neither store house nor barn; and GOD feedeth them. How much are ye *better than* the fowls? &c. Luke xii. 15, 31.

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be *content*, Phil. iv. 11.

"Goldliness with *contentment*, is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having *food* and *raiment*, let us be therewith content. But they that *will be rich*, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the *love of money*, is the root of all evil; which while some *coveted* after, they have been seduced from the

faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of GOD, flee these things, 1 *Tim.* vi. 6. 11."

CHAP. VIII.

OF RELIGION.

I DO not here intend to describe *Religion* in its full extent; for so it includes all the duties already specified, as *prudence, diligence, justice, integrity of speech, contentment, &c.* but chiefly to consider it as it respects our behaviour to GOD. Religion, in this sense, consists in having just apprehensions of him, and *minds and practices formed agreeable thereto;* it is often pointed out to us in the sacred scriptures, by some operative principle, which has a general influence upon our tempers and lives; as the "fear of GOD;" Psal. xxxiv. 7, 9, 11. Eccles. viii. 12. "the love of GOD;" Rom. viii. 28. "the knowledge of GOD;" Dan. vii. 32. "walking before GOD;" Gen. xlviii. 15. "uprightness of heart," Psalm lxiv. 10. "being spiritually minded;" Rom. viii. 6. and the like.

But alas for us, these are principles not *natural* to man: his mind is *darkened* by ignorance; his affections are *estranged* from GOD and goodness; all his powers and faculties are *impaired* and *perverted* by sin; and the original rectitude of his nature is contradicted by sensual and evil appetites and affections. Such is the depravity of the human mind, that, when *religion* takes place in it men are said to be "born again;" John iii. 7. to be made "new creatures;" Gal. vi. 15. to be "created again in Christ Jesus unto good works;" Eph. ii. 10. "and renewed in the spirit of their minds." Eph. iv. 23. Vain is the attempt to heal this or that folly of the mind, or irregularity of the life, until the *corrupt fountain* of a vicious heart, from whence they proceed, be purified: the *tree* must first be made good, before the fruit can be so. Matt. xii. 33. Our consciences must be "purged from dead works; Heb. ix. 14. and our souls *united to Jesus Christ*, by a true and living faith, John xv. 4. before we can acceptably serve the *living* GOD. "How vain are all our confessions of sin, unless they flow from godly sorrow, and are attended with a sincere faith in the great Redeemer's inter-

cession, and an unfeigned repentance before GOD? What are all our praises and thanksgivings to God, unless they proceed from true love to Him, and gratitude for his mercies? What are our prayers and petitions, but real mockeries of His infinite Majesty, unless they are the true and hearty desire of our souls? And how vain are all pretences to the love and reverence of GOD, unless they are productive of sincere and universal obedience to His will?" In a word, GOD's *work* must be done according to GOD's *mind*, if we expect that He should accept it at our hands; and this cannot be without a renewed soul; "The carnal mind is enmity against GOD, and is not subject to the law of GOD; neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD." Rom. viii. 7.

The foundation of a *religious* life, being thus laid by *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a *rectitude of heart* towards GOD, we proceed to consider some instances wherein it is to be exerted. And,

1st. *In the operative knowledge of the perfections of* GOD, and *the relations in which we stand towards Him.* His glorious *perfections* must have some suitable influence

upon us. His *Majesty* and *Greatness*, must affect us with *humble reverence*, in all our thoughts and speeches of Him, and in all our approaches to him in religious worship. Trifling, diminutive thoughts of GOD, the bold and irreverent use of his name; and careless addresses to Him in worship, are affronts to the infinite glory of His nature. If we would serve GOD acceptably, it must be "with reverence and godly fear; for our GOD is a consuming fire." Heb. xii. 28. His *unsearchable goodness* and *excellence*, claim our warmest *affection*, and highest *delight*; to fix our supreme love on an inferior good, is to slight and undervalue his glorious Majesty, and can only arise from a strange perversion of our judgment. He is not only the greatest good *in Himself*, and the infinite fountain of all that is wise, amiable and good in the universe; but He is the best good *for us*; the only satisfying substantial delight of a reasonable immortal spirit; and therefore demands "to be loved with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength." Matt. xxii. 37. His *benefits* too, as well as his *nature*, claim this our supreme affection and love to Him; as He has given us our

beings, and all the enjoyments of them, and we continually partake of his goodness, and depend on His benignity. His *purity* and *holiness*, as they are the foundation of our *veneration* and *esteem*, so they should affect us with an *humbling sense* of our own guilt and depravity, and cause us to fly to the grace and spirit of our adorable Redeemer, for the *pardon* of our guilt, and and the *healing* of our natures; and never rest, until we attain a nearer resemblance to GOD in Holiness, that we may be better fitted for the enjoyment of Him. His *Omniscience* should induce us to *watch over* the inward dispositions and thoughts of our hearts; and deter us from all *dissimulation* and *hypocrisy*, both in the duties of religion, and in our concerns with men; as being continually in the presence, and under the eye of that God, "before whom all things are naked and open." Heb. iv. 13. And, lastly, His *wisdom* and *power*, His *justice* and *truth*, are to be *reverenced* in His threatenings; to be *relied* on His promises; to be *credited* and *submitted* to in all the declarations of his word, and in every event of his providence.

Likewise his *relations* to us, and ours to him, must be answered by *suitable* disposi-

tions and behaviour. As *creatures* we are to remember that he is our absolute Lord and owner; that we are *his* much more than any thing we possess is *our own*, having only a derived right from him to all that we enjoy; and therefore, it is our indispensible duty to *yield ourselves to him*, and use ourselves and all our capacities *for him* as our highest end. Rom. vi. 13, 19. To pay an universal obedience to his will, render an entire resignation of ourselves to his providence; and, thus, we need not fear but he will preserve and bless us, employ us in delightful and honourable service, and return us to ourselves infinitely better than he found us. "Ye are not your own; therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Rom. xiv. 7, 9. As our *preserver* and *benefactor*, we should *trust* in his goodness, and *resign* ourselves to his care; *seek* TO HIM continually, for all the blessings we need; retain a grateful sense, and offer him our thankful acknowledgments, for all *benefits* we receive at his hand; which is also to be expressed by the *love* and *duty* of our hearts and lives. These are duties to which the light of nature confirms our ob-

ligations; and which all reasonable beings are bound to pay to GOD, as their sovereign Lord and Creator.

But then, as we are *guilty*, *depraved creatures*, who have, in manifold instances, brought ourselves under the *condemnation* of GOD's holy law, and rendered ourselves odious to his pure and unspotted nature; all hopes of his favour and acceptance would have been cut off, if in infinite goodness and mercy he had not offered himself to us, in the *new relations* of a REDEEMER, and a SANCTIFIER. This is the great design of the gospel of Christ to propose and confirm to all, who, sensible of their guilt and just demerits, sincerely and cordially embrace him as their Saviour. By these we are obliged, if we would be safe and happy for time and eternity, to reflect with shame and sorrow upon our disobedience and apostacy from GOD; to "fly for refuge" Heb. vi. 18. from his just vengeance, to Jesus Christ, as the only *Redeemer* of sinners; *trusting in* his sacrifice and mediation, to procure our acceptance with GOD; Acts iv. 12. Rom. vi. 23. 1 Cor. iii. 11. living as his *disciples* in the imitation of his holy life; 1 John ii. 6. attending to his *doctrines*, as

the great teacher and restorer of mankind; Acts iiii. 23, 23 and obeying his *heavenly precepts*, as the universal Lord and head of his church. Heb. v. 9. Luke vi. 46. In order to this, we must implore the *influences* of the holy Spirit of GOD, to *sanctify* and *renew* our natures, to restore the image of GOD lost in our souls, and give us the temper and disposition of his children; that we may be fitted for his present service, and future enjoyment. Thus the *practical knowledge* of GOD, must influence us in the whole frame of our hearts and lives.

2d. *Religion* consists in *adhering to the word of* GOD, as the rule of our faith and practice. A reverential regard to the *holy scriptures*, and an humble subjection of soul to the sacred contents of them, is an inseperable consequent of true religion. *He that is of* GOD, *will hear* and reverence GOD's *word*, John viii. 47. and be directed by it in every situation and circumstance of life. The more we study it, and the nearer we conform to it, the more wise, reasonable and happy we shall be; and we never depart from the important dictates of it, but ignorance, folly, and unhappiness, take place. It has ever been

an invariable rule, without any exception, that the more any have been influenced by a spirit of *true religion* and *virtue*, the more their *esteem* and *love* to these blessed records have increased; and we may venture to affirm, that the neglect and contempt that is thrown upon the *Bible*, is the nearest cause of all the profaneness and immorality of the present age. This is one instance therefore of the Tradesman's *religion*, not to govern himself by the examples of others, by humour, appetite, or selfish views; but by the *holy word of* GOD, and such directions as sound reason will deduce from thence. I am apt to believe, that very many of the indiscretions and misfortunes of Tradesmen would have been prevented, if they had walked more steadily by this rule. "Bind them *then* continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee; for the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Prov. vi. 21, 23.

3d. The Tradesman's *religion* lies in *living by faith* on GOD, under all the

changes and vicissitudes of an inconstant world. This, like an *anchor sure* and *stedfast*, will keep the soul quiet and serene in all the storms of life; enliven the christian's hope, animate his endeavours, and make him easy in every state and condition. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah xxvi. 3. But how contrary to this is the state of every ungodly, earthly mind? If the world smiles upon him he idolizes it as his deity; if it frowns upon him, he despairs and dies. As all his hopes and prospects centre here, his comfort and security is as fluctuating as the foundation on which it is built; *i. e.* temporal prosperity.* Where-

* Oh how they dream of things impossible!
Of joys perpetual, in perpetual change!
Of stable pleasures on the tossing wave!
Eternal sunshine in the storms of life!
'Till at death's toll, or heaven's relentless blast,
Starting they wake, and find themselves undone.
The spider's most attenuated thread,
Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie,
Or earthly bliss; it breaks at every breeze.

DR. YOUNG.

as the good man, though he is not *insensible* of the difference between prosperity and adversity, yet is not anxiously "afraid of evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Psal. cxii. 10. And then what are all the great concerns of religion without *faith?* which is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for." What influence will the word or worship of GOD have upon us, heaven or hell, GOD or Christ, without *faith?* In a word, we must live by *faith*, and breathe by *prayer.*

4th. The *serious* and *constant worship of* GOD, is another principle branch of *religion.* The same light of reason and revalation, which manifests to us the *being* of GOD, proves that it is our indispensible duty to *worship* him. This is a truth so deeply impressed upon the mind of man, that scarce any of the human species under heaven, except among the degenerate part of those that call themselves *christians*, but in some way or another, pay their adorations to the Deity by worship. This is the *Tradesman's* duty as well as others, for how can he be said to "abide with GOD in his calling," 1 Cor. vii. 24. who never comes *near* him? By medita-

tion and prayer we draw nigh to GOD, and by his word he speaks to us; and surely creatures whose happiness for both worlds depends upon GOD, should not stand in need of arguments to seek continually unto him; "for will not every people seek unto their GOD?" Isa. viii. 19. But the Tradesman's religious *worship* should not be confined to the church or the closet. He has family wants to be relieved, family sins to be forgiven, and family blessings to be thankful for: *family worship*, therefore, is his reasonable and indispensable duty. Accordingly we find those families represented as the subjects of divine vengence, "who call not upon GOD's name." Jer. x. 25. At the fittest time, therefore, morning and evening, let your serious addresses be made to heaven, with all your family; let not company or business tempt you to *neglect* this duty, or to do it *unseasonably*. Remember that the most high GOD claims your first and highest regard, and that nothing can excuse your *omission* of his worship, but some necessary and greater duty. Say not, you want *time* for it, for men must find time to eat, and sleep, whatever business is left undone; and none of these are more necessary, nor can you be

less excusable in the neglect of any of them, than of worship. An hour in twenty-four, may be sufficient for this necessary and advantageous duty; as it is not the length, but the sincerity of our services, which render them acceptable to GOD; and it is incredible, that with proper care you cannot secure so much time for such an important affair. Neither plead that the business of your callings leave you, in the evening, *without strength* or *spirits* for it; for immoderate labour may be as criminal, as immoderate feeding: GOD requires, and will accept and bless no such eagerness in business, as unfits men for his service; but, however, let it be remembered that this can be no excuse in the *morning;* your spirits are then fresh and vigorous. It is to be feared, that such pleas as these, are rather the effects of a want of *inclination*, than of ability. We should with much more reason say, I have laboured all the day for a little *food* and *raiment*, &c. shall I not exert myself in the evening for the blessings of GOD's *forgiveness and grace?* I have wearied my body for a *living on earth*, shall I not stretch forth my soul for the *eternal crown?* O! let not your diligence and solicitude for the trea-

sures of *this world*, condemn your slothfulness and indolence for *heavenly riches*, but let each have their *due time* and *place* in your hearts and employments.

5th. *The religious observance of the Lord's day*, is another branch of true religion. This is one of the *first* things which the grace of GOD reforms in the sincere christian; no sooner does he begin to look in earnest towards GOD and heaven; but he values and employs *the holy day* of GOD in a different manner than he did before; and as religion more or less flourishes in the soul, so this *sacrad time* is ever more or less esteemed and improved. *Remember the sabbath day*, therefore, *before it comes*, and endeavour to clear your minds of worldly cares and incumbrances, that you may be fit for the noble and divine employments of it; fit to adore and praise the majesty and perfections of GOD your maker; to celebrate and seek the blessings of redeeming love and grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to hear his most holy word, and receive the instructions of it; to acknowledge with gratitude and joy the mercies you partake of; and with sincere sorrow and contrition, to lament and confess the sins and follies of

your hearts and lives; in a word to obtain and strengthen all those holy tempers and dispositions, as may fit you for a wise, happy, and religious life on earth, and the glories of an everlasting state in the world to come. Let not the *love* or *guilt* of any sin, enter into this holy day to defile it, but, "wash your hands in innocency, and so compass the altar of GOD" Psal. xxvi. 6. Though cheerfulness and holy joy are especially the duties of this day; yet be careful to abstain from *sensual* pleasures, and not only vile, but *vain* and *fruitless* thoughts and converse. Let no *worldly business* be either contrived or done, which might have been done before, or may be deferred till future time, but "call the sabbath a delight, *as it is* holy to the Lord, and honourable; and honour him therein; not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words." Isa. lviii. 13. Consider how great the blessing is, that you have leave to approach to GOD, and time to prepare your souls for an eternal state, and improve it accordingly.

LET your *families* also partake of the same advantages. This is one reason why the common employments of life are

prohibited on *this day*; that *servants*, as they have souls of equal value with the greatest, may have the means of improvement in knowledge and holiness. "The seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy GOD; in it thou shalt not do any work: That thy man servant, and thy maid servant may rest as well as thou." Deut. v. 14, 15. Give them *sufficient time* for the worship of almighty GOD: and let not their *souls* be starved, for the sake of feasting your *bodies*. Not only *allow* your children and servants time for the religious duties of the day; but *watch over them* to see that they attend upon the same: *instruct* them in religion and virtue; *encourage* them in what is good, and seriously *reprove* what is amiss in them. You deal worse by them, than you would by your *very cattle*, if you suffer them to go on in the paths which lead to misery and destruction, without doing what in you lies *to prevent* it. Never give them rest, therefore, until you have, with the help of GOD, either cured their ignorance and irreligion, or find them incurable.

Remember also, that it is "the sabbath of the Lord, in all your dwellings." Lev. xxiii. 3. And therefore, let him be *ho-*

toured and *served there*, as well as in the places of public worship. Read his word with reverence and attention; sing his praises with understanding and delight; and seek his favour with humility, faith and sincerity; that by these *lower services* you may be fitted for the *heavenly state*, and carry the *blessing of* GOD into the labours of the ensuing week; for it was the observation of a great and good man,* "that in long experience he had found, that due observation of the duties of the *Lord's day*, had ever joined with it a blessing upon the rest of his time, and the week so begun was prosperous to him; whereas, when he had been negligent in the duties of this day, the rest of the week was unsuccessful, and unhappy to his own secular employments." And this is far from being a singular observation.

6th, An habitual disposedness unto, and practice of *religious conversation*, is another material branch of the christian's duty. I mean, to employ the noble faculty of speech in a manner becoming reason and religion. "The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talk-

* Lord Chief Justice Hale.

eth of judgment. The law of GOD is in his heart." Psal. xxxvii. 30, 31. Particularly we should abstain from *hurtful* converse; such as *reflects upon* the honour of the blessed GOD, or tends to *lessen* men's regard to him; such as *defiles* and *corrupts* the mind: injures the reputation of those that are *absent*, or provokes and insults those that are *present;* or is merely *idle*, *empty* and *vain;* in a word, whatsoever is contrary to the laws of *charity*, *religion*, or *chastity*, should be banished from our lips. But then, we must aim at something *useful*, as well as abstain from every thing *hurtful* in our conversation. A negative goodness is no more sufficient in this, than in other parts of the christian character; the tongue of man was given him to be employed to his *Maker's* praise, and to be *useful* and *instructive* to those around him; and angels themselves have not nobler or more delightful subjects for the employment of it than we; "the glorious perfections of GOD; the amiable Jesus; the holy word of GOD; his wonderful works of nature, providence, and grace; the happiness of the eternal world before us; the means and help to our safe arrival there, and fitness for it; and the dangers, follies,

and snares, that lie in our way, obstruct our progress to it, and possession of it." These are topics of conversation the more interesting and delightful; and nothing but the perfection of madness and folly, can sneer at their being introduced on all proper occasions; or think that the shifting of the wind; the nature of the weather; the conduct of their neighbours; and a thousand other impertinences, are subjects so well becoming man's rational soul, and immortal nature.

I am sensible, that as we have concerns of a lower nature to regard, while we remain in the present state, they ought to have a *proportionate share* of our thoughts and words; neither is it proper at all times, to *expose* the sacred truths of religion to the contempt of the vile or profane. But that *religious converse* should be banished from the lips of those that call themselves *men* and *christians*, as melancholy, mean, or improper: is as absurd as to say, that the world is better than GOD, or money than heaven; and the pleasures of appetite and animal sense, better than grace and glory; and the sneers of a fool, worse than hell or sin.

7th. *Pious meditation*, is another branch of true *religion*. Much of the temper of our minds may be discerned by the currency of our *thoughts*. In the covetous, these run out with the greatest constancy and delight after gain and riches; in the voluptuous, various sensitive pleasures and gratifications employ them. Honour and applause engross the thoughts of the ambitious; but as the hopes and happiness of the sincere christian centre in GOD and his favour, he cannot but employ his frequent, serious *thoughts* about the securing an enjoyment of it; for this is one of his infallible dictates, who formed the spirit of man, and knows all the operations of it, "that where the treasure is, there the heart will be also." Matt. vi. 21. While the *hands* of the pious Tradesman are employed in the common business of life, his *heart* will be aspiring to GOD, and delighting itself in his perfections, word and works. As no ship is so laden but it will contain many jewels more, so no business can so constantly fill up our minds, as not to allow of serious intervening thoughts. There is no need to retire to a *cloister*, in order to preserve a religi-

qus disposition of mind or lead a virtuous life.

But our *meditations* should be considered as the means to a *further* end; namely, to *influence* and *affect* our souls; we should be musing until the fire burns: for which purpose, we should choose those subjects that are *most powerful* and *operative*.—Great and important truths, as they are usually the surest, and least controverted, so they most effectually impress the mind, and leave an happy influence upon it. Among which are, the *perfections* of GOD; his wonderful *love* and *goodness*, as revealed in Jesus Christ; the awful solemnities of a *future* judgement; the importance and certainty of an *eternal state* of existence; the shortness and instability of *time*, and all the *enjoyments* of it. These are included in those mentioned before, which if attended to, would, by the grace of GOD, produce a religious temper of mind, and an holy life.

Sometimes we may turn our *meditations* into *ejaculatory* prayers and addresses to heaven: such as that of *Nehemiah*. "Remember me, O my GOD, for good;" Nehem. xii. 31. or of the royal Psalmist; "Lord, I am thine, save me;" Psal. cxix.

and the like. These, when you feel the guilt of *sin* to press you, or the sense of *mercy* to affect you, or any *danger* or *difficulty* to affright you; will be a present relief to your spirits, until the more stated time for devotion returns. Sometimes our *thoughts* may be well employed by way of *soliloquy*, or conversing with ourselves: either rousing up our slothful spirits, or comforting our drooping souls, or pleading with our own hearts by convincing reasons; these methods pious men have often taken to good purpose: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul," says the Psalmist; "why art thou disquieted within me?" Having thus reproved his unreasonable fears, his faith revives, and he says, "hope thou in GOD, for I shall yet praise him; who is the health of my countenance, and my GOD." Psal. xliii. 5.

Lastly, great variety of useful *reflections* may be drawn from the common *occurrences* of life, and the various *objects* which present themselves to our view. Thus the sudden *death of others*, may quicken us in preparing for our own, and shew us the vanity of earthly pursuits. The sight of the *deformed* and *miserable*, may teach us an useful lesson of gratitude to

GOD for his greater goodness to us. The manifold dangers, and excessive labours which others undergo for *trifling advantages;* may shame us out of negligence in our pursuit of *heaven* and *happiness:* and indeed, there is scarce any thing but a serious mind *may improve* to its great advantage. This, no doubt, was the design of the frequent *similies* and *parables* of the word of GOD, that we might be taught instruction from sensible objects. Thus we are sent to the *ant*, Prov. vi. 6. to learn sagacity and diligence; to the *potter*, Jer. viii. 7. for submission to the will of GOD; to the *refiner*, Zec. xii, 9. for consolation and instruction under affliction. And our blessed Saviour's gospel is filled with *emblems*, for the same purposes: Among which are, the *Vine*, the *Fig tree*, the *Pearl of great price*, the *importunate Widow*, and *prodigal Son*. Easy would be the task, and great the advantage, if the religious Tradesman would thus, like the industrious bee, gather honey from every flower. Surely, the consideration is sad, that christians should know how to converse with men, and sometimes with GOD himself, and yet be at a loss to commune with their *own hearts*.

The practice of *Religion* necessarily includes *watchfulness.* Wherever the love and fear of GOD is in sincerity, there will be a constant concern to please him; and this can never be attained by beings whose natures are imperfect, and appetites and passions strong and irregular, amidst surrounding solicitations to evil from an ensnaring world, and vigilant spiritual adversaries; unless we *watch*, as well as pray against every temptation. This *watchfulness* the christian should especially maintain against the *particular sins* to which his calling, situation, and constitution expose him. The sure sign of *uprightness of heart*, consists in keeping ourselves "from our own iniquity;" Psal. xviii. 23. that which our dispositions most *incline* us unto; which we find most *difficult* to resist, and hardest to overcome; for which conscience most *frequently* reproves us, and we condemn ourselves when under *affliction*, or in the apprehensions of *death.*

But the vices which human nature are most prone unto, are *covetousness* and *sensuality;* the *Tradesman* therefore should be peculiarly *watchful* against them. They are the root of all evils; they *estrange* the heart from, and *deaden* the affections to,

GOD and goodness; the *sensualize* the very souls of men, and give such *a criminal bias* to their appetites and inclinations, as produces forgetfulness and contempt of GOD, a disrelish to the purity and spirituality of his laws and worship, the neglect of their immortal souls, and the concerns of another world; they *cloud* the understanding, *pervert* the judgment, *extinguish* the principles of religion, justice, truth and benevolence, in the hearts of men, and *debase* their natures to a resemblance of the beasts that perish: in a word, the prevalence of them is every where in scripture, represented as absolutely inconsistent with the *christian life*, and destructive of our *heavenly hopes*. "This ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of GOD" Eph. v. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Psal. x. 3. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh: But they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death. Because the carnal mind is enmity against GOD; for it is not subject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please GOD. For

if ye live after the flesh ye shall die, &c." Rom. viii. 5, 13. John ii. 15, 16.

Having thus considered some instances of a *religious* temper and life, let us *reflect upon ourselves*, and consider what *our own* dispositions and practice have been. Have we ever experienced such a *renovation of mind*, as has given us a prevailing bias of soul towards GOD and Christ, heaven and holiness? Or are we *the same* self righteous, censual, dead and disaffected beings to GOD and goodness, that ever we were? Have the glorious *perfections* of the adorable GOD, and the relations in which we stand unto him, had an habitual practical influence upon our tempers and our lives? Or have we forgotten GOD that formed us; neglected to glorify that supreme and transcendant being in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways; and lightly esteemed the Lord Jesus Christ, the Rock of our Salvation? Have we studied and reverenced the *holy word* of GOD, and made that the rule and guide of our lives? Or have we made the customs and examples of an evil world, or our own selfish interests and humours, the rule of all our conduct? Have we *lived by faith* on GOD, for all the supports and supplies

of life? Or "have we made gold our hope, and said to fine gold, thou art our confidence?" Has the *worship* of the Almighty been performed with seriousness, faith, and constancy, in our families and retirements? Or have we lived as without GOD in the world, and cast off his fear, by restraining prayer before him? Have we honoured, reverenced, and delighted in the *sabbaths* of the Lord? Or have they been esteemed a weariness unto us, and the time thought long, wherein we were detained from the common business and pleasures of the world? Have we *set a watch* before the door of our lips? Has our conversation been sober, rational, useful and religious? Have our hearts been frequently aspiring to GOD, by *serious reflection* and *meditation* in order to animate and strengthen the life of GOD in our souls? Or has not the vanity and folly of our thoughts and words, been too plain an indication that a wise and religious disposition of heart, and temper of mind, have been wanting in us? To conclude; have we been watchful and circumspect in our christian course; especially against the *predominant sins* of covetousness and sensuality? Or have our souls been buried in

the earth, or drowned in carnality; and GOD, Christ, and the eternal world, been forgotten and neglected by us? These are *questions* we should put close to our consciences, while there is time and space for repentance; before we are called to the presence of GOD, from whose judgment there is no appeal; and whose scrutiny into our hearts and lives, will be more particular and exact, than any we can enter into upon ourselves.

I shall endeavour to remove some of those *prejudices* which arise in the minds of men against a *religious* life.

One is, the *difficulties of religion;* that the rules of it are too self denying, and the path to heaven too narrow to be comfortable and happy. To this it may be replied, that there is nothing which GOD requires but what is conducive to the *real happiness* of reasonable creatures; and nothing that he forbids but what is consistent with it. The excessive indulgence of animal appetites, and disorderly affections, whatever low satisfactions they may give at present, are as destructive of the *true peace*, as they are of the *purity* of the human mind; and are these restrictions of religion then fit subjects of complaint? If our vitiated natures find some of the rules

of religion a *restraint* upon our inclinations, can we think that our appetites and affections are always so wise and reasonable as never to *need a curb?* Or shall we repent, when we arrive at the regions of bliss, that our labour has been *too much*, or our self denial *too great*, in order to attain that happy state? Surely not. But there is really nothing so hard in religion, but the grace of GOD, and the habits of virtue, will *make it easy* to us; the greatest difficulties are usually at first, before the mind is healed of its prevailing distempers; the longer we travel on in the paths of religion, the more sweet and delightful they become unto us: As all the employments of life appear difficult when we first enter upon them, why should difficulties in religion *only* affright us? If we believe GOD, and credit those who have made the experiment, they assure us, that "all its ways are pleasantness, and its paths peace," Prov. iii. 17. and "in keeping of them is great reward." Psal. xix.

If it be said, that such *strictness* and *circumspection* is more ado *than needs*. Let such only consult the sacred word of GOD, by which we are to be judged, and see whether "denying all ungodliness and

wordly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world," Tit. ii. 12. is not every where made the *qualification* for enjoying the happiness of the next: And then consider, whether the dark and depraved mind of man, or the declarations of infinite rectitude, wisdom and goodness, are the *fittest* to determine what state of soul is necessary for his own acceptance and enjoyment.

Some perhaps are unwilling to engage in the *christian* course, from an apprehension that it may *expose them to contempt* from others, as being singular and precise. But what I pray you is there that can merit contempt in the belief, reverence, and love of the GOD of heaven and earth; in owning your dependence upon him, and expressing your gratitude to him, by humble prayer and praise? What in a strict regard to goodness, truth and justice to man, and the government of your appetites and passions? Yet these are the *substance* of religion: It is by these that you are afraid of being made ridiculous; than which, nothing can more ennoble, and adorn and bless human nature. It was the observation of one of the wiser heathens,

"That virtue was so beautiful, that if it could be rendered visible to the eyes of man, every one would be in love with it." Where religion is *not maimed* and deformed by its professors, it commands *reverence* and *respect* from the observers of it. Certain I am, that there is not the most profligate person now on earth, who would not shortly give ten thousand worlds, if such he had, that his own life had been in every respect *as strictly conformed* to the wise and holy will of GOD, as that of the most diligent observer of the divine precepts. Which then most deserves our regard, the approbation of GOD, of angels, and of all good men; or the censures of those who will soon condemn themselves; for the neglect of what they now despise; "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. *For* whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Mark viii 34, 38.

Only let it be further observed, that a life of serious, practical *religion*, is recommended to us by the most *weighty considerations.*

It is the *truest wisdom*. He certainly is the *wisest* man, who by serious diligence, and prudent foresight, secures to himself the greatest good, and escapes the greatest evil. As heaven is better than earth, and eternity longer than time, so much *more wise* is he, who by faith in Christ Jesus, and a conformity to the prescribed rules of the gospel, obtains the invaluable blessings of it, than he that gains the greatest earthly good.* If GOD, the fountain of wisdom, is the proper Judge, we have his decision in these words; "Unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding." Job xxviii. 28. But how vain is that man's pretences to *wisdom*, how much soever he shines in wealth, wit, or learning, whose mind is estranged from

* Eternity depending on an hour,
Makes serious thought, man's *wisdom*, joy and praise:
Nor need you blush at your design on heaven.
Our schemes to plan by this world, or the next.
Is the sole diff'rence between the *wise* and *fool;*
All worthy men will weigh you in this scale.

DR. YOUNG.

GOD, and his eternal felicity neglected, for the dreams and shadows of earthly pursuits and enjoyments?

A life of religion affords the most *solid happiness.* There is nothing so much *enobles* and *regulates* the faculties of the soul, and crowns it with *peace* and *tranquillity*, as the faith and fear of GOD, and a supreme affection to him; a relation to the Lord Jesus as a Saviour, &c. The *delights* of sincere religion, do as far surpass the pleasures of the covetous, the sensual and voluptuous, as the pleasures of a *man* do those of the *brutes.* If the blessed GOD is the *most happy* Being, then they that bear the *nearest* resemblance to him, must necessarily be the *most happy* creatures. They not only enjoy the divine pleasures of a religious life, but have by far the *truest comfort* of those blessings they possess in common with other men. Religion restrains us from no pleasures which are *consistent with* reason, and our truest interest; nothing can afford so much *support* under the unavoidable afflictions of the present state: and I may venture to affirm, that even the *penitential* sorrows of a good man, have *more true satisfaction* in them, than the greatest de-

lights that the vicious and profane ever enjoyed.

Lastly, *True religion* is of the *greatest necessity*. All other concerns compared with this, are but as the toys of children to the labours of life. This is "the one thing needful," without which, the *end* of man's creation is lost, the *glory* of GOD in his works is frustrated, and the *whole existence* of reasonable beings is vain. It were infinitely better never to have had *a being*, than leave this world with the guilt of sin *unpardoned*, and the power of it *unsubdued*. And it is also *necessary* for securing a blessing upon all our temporal concerns. *Godliness hath the promise of this life*, as well as *that which is to come*. 1 Tim. iv. 8. If we *truly* serve GOD, he will *certainly* bless us. Men may increase their riches by other methods, but the prosperity of such fools *only tends to* destroy them." Prov. i. And GOD can easily *blast* the most vigorous endeavours for this life, if we *neglect* the love and duty we owe to him. The *Tradesman* would do well to consider whether many of his losses and decays may not be the *chastisement* of his neglect of these important concerns.

" This commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest *do it*. See, I have set before thee this day *life* and *good*, *death*, and *evil*. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy GOD, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live; and that the Lord thy GOD may bless thee. But if thine heart *turn away*, so that thou wilt not hear; I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore *choose life* that thou and thy seed may live, &c. Deut. xxx. 11, 20.

" The Lord GOD of Israel saith, them that *honour* me, I will honour, and they that *despise* me shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

" Only fear the Lord, and *serve him in truth* with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.

" Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David great mercy, according as he walked before thee in *truth* and in *righteous-*

ness, and in *uprightness of heart* with thee, 1 Kings iii. 6.

" Blessed are they that *keep his testimonies*, and that *seek him* with the whole heart. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently. I have rejoiced in the way of *thy testimonies* as much as in all riches. Depart from me ye evil doers, for *I will keep* the commandments of my GOD. Salvation is far from the wicked, for they *seek not* thy statutes. Lord, I have hoped for thy *salvation*, and done thy *commandments*, &c. *Psal.* cxix. 2, 4, 14, 115, 155, 166.

" In the way of *righteousness* is life, and in the pathway thereof is no death, *Prov.* xii. 28.

" Whoso *despiseth* the word shall be destroyed. But he that *feareth the commandment* shall be rewarded, *Prov.* xiii. 13.

" Now also the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which bringeth not forth *good fruit* is hewn down, and cast into the fire. His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up *the chaff* with unquenchable fire, *Matt.* iii. 10, 12.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven, *Matt.* vii. 21.

"Then said they unto him, what shall we do, that we might work the works of GOD; Jesus said unto them, *this* is the work of GOD, that ye *believe on him* whom he hath sent, *John* vi. 28, 29. 1 *John* iii. 23.

"Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience *void of offence* toward God, and toward man, *Acts* xxiv. 16.

"What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become *servants to* GOD, ye have your *fruit unto holiness*, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of GOD is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Rom.* vi. 21, 23.

"This is the will of GOD, even your *sanctification.* For GOD hath not called us unto uncleanliness, but unto *holiness*, 1 *Thess.* iv. 3. 7.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, who gave him-

self for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity, and *purify* unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, *Tit.* ii. 13. 14.

"He suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that *obey him*, Heb. v. 8, 9.

"Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord. Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of GOD, &c. *Heb.* xii. 14, 15.

"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, &c. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in *all holy conversation* and godliness? 2 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11."

CHAP. IX.

OF LEAVING OUR CALLINGS.

WE come in the last place to consider *in what cases* it is allowable and fit for persons to *leave* their callings. Necessary and important occasions may detain or divert the Tradesman from his business, as the restoration of his health, and various other occurrences which happen in life; or he may for wise reasons contract his trade, and lessen the cares and labours that attend it: but what I mean, is the *wholly forsaking* of business; which is a great and important affair, and should never be done without due consideration and advice. Present *impulses*, or the tolerable *inconveniencies* of trade, can never justify such a conduct, unless the rules of wisdom and prudence concur. How far *wealth*, or the love of a retired life may

justify it, was considered in the *first* part of this essay. In some cases no doubt it is allowable:

1st. When *superior authority* requires it, as being called and advanced to some place of honourable employment and trust in the government, may lawfully *leave* his former calling. In like manner when persons are put under *restraint* or *confinement*, either by the magistrate, or by the suit of an adversary, he is so long at least discharged from his former calling, and possibly rendered incapable thereby from ever following it again.

2d. When persons are *totally disabled* by the diseases of *body* or *mind*. It is not every distemper or pain of *body*, which will justify the deserting our stations in life; for diseases are inseparable from some constitutions and from some callings too. And considering the curious frame of the bodies of men, and the irregularities of their appetites and passions: we have more cause to admire at *one* day's vigour and health, than an *hundred* days sickness and pain: But the aged or infirm Tradesman may, like the pilot in the ship, be serviceable in his profession by his *advice* and *direction*, when he cannot employ his

active powers of strength and labour. The *disability* only releases the Tradesman from his calling, which renders him incapable of following it *to those ends for which they are managed.* When his body suffers on the one hand, and his employment on the other, and there is no rational prospect of being *restored* to a capacity for it: in this case, GOD by his providence *releases* him from his calling; it becomes a necessary cessation, and not a criminal indulgence. Let the *younger Tradesman* consider this, and be *provident* for the future; let him not spend his income as fast as it arises, but in dependence upon the divine providence, and in a prudent and charitable use of what he possesses; let him *remember the days of evil*, for they may be many. Particularly let him be watchful against that intemperance and vice, which ruins both *health* and *substance* too.

3d. *Incapacity of mind*, may also discharge persons from their stations and callings. Not that every trouble of mind will excuse us from attending to the proper business of life: the means must be used, and remedies applied; the divine, and the physician consulted, and it may be, no remedy is more successful for the cure, (un-

der the blessing of heaven) than an *honest diligence* in our callings. But when reason is *utterly clouded*, or the faculties so enfeebled, that there is *no prospect* of future capacity, that is a sufficient discharge. Since this is an affliction so grievous in its nature, and hurtful in its consequences, let the Tradesman beware of those things which introduce it. Subdue *high passions*, either of love, anger, or fear. *Provoke not* GOD and conscience, by violations of truth, justice and religion. Beware of *worldly sorrow*, pour not upon losses and disappointments. Grasp not at *more business* than your minds or circumstances can bear. *Abuse not* your parts, nor meddle with *abstrue speculations*, or things that are too high for you; but be humble. Maintain an *innocent cheerfulness* in every condition; labour to insure to yourselves the *comforts* of religion; and habituate yourselves to temperance and exercise of body, and you will be safe from this calamity, which renders so many a terror to themselves, and a grief to all around them.

4th. When *misfortunes in trade* have rendered them incapable of being carried on. It is not *every loss* or *abatement* of trade or substance, that will justify the *for-*

saking our callings; many have been reduced to a very low ebb, who by the blessing of providence, and their own care and industry, have recovered themselves, and made considerable acquisitions of estate: but when business requires that substance to carry it on, which by losses and other occurrences we are *dispossessed of*, and the maintenance of our callings oblige us to contract debts which we are *unlikely to repay*, justice and prudence require the cessation from them. In these cases, a person does not properly leave his calling but his calling leaves him. Under these circumstances, it becomes a Tradesman to *review* his past behaviour, and see, whether a criminal neglect of GOD, injustice and oppression of others, or some sinful indulgencies, or extravagance, has not procured this evil to him; lest those sins which have driven him from his *shop*, exclude him from *heaven* also.

5th. Tradesmen may allowably *leave their callings*, when a considerable degree of *age* and *estate* inclines and capacitates them so to do. It is not only lawful, but becoming in those who are *advanced in wealth*, and *declining in years*, to make room for the increase of younger Trades-

men; and not like aged trees, stand to obstruct the growth of those below them. An increasing love of wealth in the decline of life, is a sight shocking to human nature.* But then the retired Tradesman should remember, that though he is discharged from the *fatigues* of life, he is not so from the *duties* of it. His leisure should be employed in preparing his mind for another state, in acts of benevolence and kindness to others; in pointing out to younger persons the paths of virtue and prosperity, and not used only as an indulgence to sloth and sensuality; lest he come under the character of the *fool*, who "said to his soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" and knew no other use of them than to "eat, drink, and be mer-

* Tottering o'er the grave.
Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
Strike deeper their base root, and closer cling,
Still more enamour'd of this wretched soil?
Shall our pale withered hands, be stretch'd out still,
Trembling at once with eagerness and age?
With av'rice, and convulsions, grasping hard?
Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?

Night Thoughts.

ry;" instead of being *rich towards* GOD, Luke xii. 19.

5th. Lastly, Any of these appear to be sufficient causes for resigning a trade, and there may be others; but while the Tradesman meets with nothing to recommend or warrant a voluntary retreat from business, while he is pursuing it with the greatest cheerfulness, diligence and success, let him ever bear it in mind that *death* will soon discharge him from his employment whatever it be. This puts an end to all our cares and labours; "Our breath goes forth, we return to the earth, and in that very day all our thoughts *and concerns for this life* perish." Psal. cxlvi. 4. This day will surely come, and it often comes when it is least expected. Therefore let the *Tradesman* be advised, to set his *soul in order* for it. What madness and folly is it to live unconcernedly in a condition, which we know not but the next day or hour, may introduce us into inevitable misery and destruction! What senseless stupidity has seized the minds of sinners, that they can stand secure on the brink of such a precipice! For to use the words of an *eminent divine*, "When GOD hath been pleased in infinite mercy, so clearly

to reveal the happiness of heaven, and the miseries of hell; if men were not amazingly stupified by sin, they could never possess a moment's ease until they had some *comfortable certainty* of enjoying the one, and escaping the other. How can persons preserve their minds from terror and amazement, when they think of a just and holy GOD, and know not but he is their *enemy?* How can they open the Bible with comfort, when they know not but they read their *own condemnation* in every page? One would think, that the uncertainty of their own salvation, should keep them *waking*, or amaze them in *dreams*, and disturb their *sleep;* when they know not if they shut their eyes, but they may *awake in torments.* And that the prospect of death and judgment, as *near* and *sure*, should fill them with horror and astonishment. Indeed, if the uncertainty was constrained, or the case remediless, it must then be borne as other unavoidable evils are; but when the *kind offers* of mercy and grace through Jesus Christ are made to repenting and believing sinners; and the *characters* of those who are in a state of salvation or condemnation, are so *plainly described* in the gospel, that if men would

with seriousness first search the *scriptures*, and then faithfully examine their *own hearts* by them, they might see which state they belong unto; nothing but unaccountable stupidity, can cause persons to live negligent of their great concern, or content themselves in uncertainty of the awful consequences of death." Never rest therefore, until your peace be made with GOD through Jesus Christ, and your heart purified from every corrupt affection by his Spirit of grace, and then *death* may be viewed with peace, and embraced with joy.

And, to conclude, the same prospect of *death*, and uncertainty of life, should induce every considerate Tradesman to set his *house in order*. Let your books, and accounts be kept as clear and even as may be; suffer not long reckonings to lie dormant between yourself and others; for these will prove very *troublesome*, or it may be very *prejudicial* to those you leave behind. And after you have computed, as near as may be, the true value of your estates, *make your Will*. Death will be more easy, but not a minute the nearer for doing this. After you have settled a reasonable portion upon your wife and children, if

GOD has so far blessed you, let your poor relations be remembered by you; and forget not to acknowledge the goodness of divine providence, by dedicating some part of your gains to pious and charitable uses; this, if it is done from a principle of faith and love, will be the best means to entail a blessing upon what you leave to your posterity. Being thus prepared by *internal* piety and *external* prudence, *death* may be expected, but need not to be feared. You may then cheerfully leave your calling on earth, to receive "the prize of the high calling of GOD, in Christ Jesus our Lord." To whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their *latter end*, Deut. xxxii. 29.

"If a man die, shall he live again! All the days of my appointed time *will I wait* till my change come, *Job*, xiv. 14.

Whatsoever thy had findeth to do, do it *with thy might*; for there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest, *Eccles.* ix. 10.

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death; and Isaiah the prophet came unto him, and said, Thus saith the Lord, set

thine *house in order*, for thou shalt die, and not live, *Isa.* xxxviii. 1.

" I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure *is at hand.* I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day, and to them also that *love his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 7.

" Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works *do follow them*, Rev. xiv. 13."

AN

APPENDIX,

Shewing the only way to obtain power for Christian duties, or the necessity of a change of state and nature, before we can acceptably serve GOD, *and practice the precepts of Religion.*

IT is the common error of many, when their consciences are convinced of the excellency and necessity of christian duties, to rush immediately upon the practice of them in their *own strength* and *na-*

tural state; and not attending to the method and order, which the infinite wisdom and mercy of GOD has established in the gospel for obtaining holiness and happiness through Christ Jesus, they often labour long and zealously in religion *without effect.* Whereas until the *persons* of sinners are *reconciled* to GOD, and *justified* by his grace through Jesus Christ; and then by virtue of *union to* the Lord Jesus and *faith*, in him, they *derive from him* the Spirit of life and holiness, it is impossible they should please GOD, or find acceptance with him, *Rom.* v. 1. *John* xv. 5. For, 1st, (as was before observed) our natural state is a state of *enmity against* GOD, and is *not subject* to his holy and spiritual government, neither indeed *can be*, Rom. viii.

6, 8. And there is an *evil inclination* in us by nature which tendeth powerfully to sin, *subduing* and *captivating* us to the love and practice of it, *Rom.* vii. 20, 23. Insomuch that we must be *born* of the Spirit, before we can *live* a spiritual life, *John* iii. 3, 6. And be *created again* in Christ Jesus unto good works before we can have *power* to perform them, *Eph.* ii. 10. 2d. While we remain in our natural state, we are under the *curse of* GOD for all our sins, *John* iii. 18. *Eph.* ii. 3. The benefit of remission of sins, and freedom from condemnation, is not given unto us in our *unrenewed* state, but only in Christ Jesus, through *faith in him*, Rom. viii. 1. Eph. i. 7. How can we imagine, therefore, to subdue sin, and practice holiness, while GOD is

against us, and *curseth* us? 3d. As we are *by nature* children of wrath, so we are under the *power* and *influence of the devil;* that evil spirit, who secretly worketh and ruleth in all the *children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2, 5. From which spiritual bondage and captivity we are only delivered *by the* Lord Jesus Christ, through faith, *Acts* xxvi. 18.

So that if you aim at pleasing God, or obeying his will, without first seeking justification by Christ's precious *blood* and *righteousness*, and sanctification by *his holy Spirit*, you will find both wind and tide against you. Your corrupted natures, guilty consciences, and Satan's power and malice, will certainly *defeat* and *bring to nought* all your purposes and at-

tempts to love GOD and serve him in sincerity and truth, *Luke* xiii. 24.

This glorious privilege of *fellowship* with Christ Jesus, whereby believers are enabled to perform acceptable obedience to GOD, is most *freely offered* to all sinners of mankind, who, sensible of their *necessitous*, *helpless*, and *lost* state and condition in themselves, are sincerely willing to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, as their only and all sufficient Saviour, and all wise disposer and governor, *Isa.* lv. 1, 5. *John* vi. 37, 40. If you thus seek to please GOD through faith in Christ Jesus (in the diligent use of the means of grace) hoping for all wisdom and strength *only from him*, 1 Cor. i. 29. Trust assuredly, that he will *enable you to do* every

thing that is necessary for his glory and your own happiness; pardoning your failings, and comforting your hearts by his love and grace, 1 *Cor.* i. 7, 9. *Gal.* v. 17.

When you have *done all you can* in the service of GOD, be sure to look for salvation and happiness only as the *free gift of* GOD'S *grace* in Christ Jesus; and not as *merited* or *deserved by your obedience*, Rom. iii. 24, 28. Gal. iii. 18, 22. Those who endeavour (either in whole or in part) to procure for themselves a right to salvation and eternal life, by their obedience to GOD'S commands, do seek salvation by the *works of the law*, and not by the *faith of* Jesus Christ, and will never obtain it by these means. For this is a *great* and *fun-*

damental error in religion, destroying the souls of men, *Luke* xviii. 9, 14. *Gal.* iii. 10, 12. For, 1. It directly *opposes the design of* GOD in man's salvation, which is to glorify his own free mercy and rich grace in Christ Jesus, *Eph.* ii. 9, 2. It makes void the *precious sacrifice* and *justifying righteousness* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whosoever thus seek to be justified *by the law*, they are fallen from *grace*: Christ is become of *no effect* unto them, and *profiteth them nothing*, Gal. v. 2, 4. ch. iii. 11, 22.

Depending on our own obedience for salvation, is a very *sinful*, as well as a fruitless, confidence. It is *despising* and *contradicting* all the infinite perfections of GOD displayed in man's recovery. His glorious mercy,

unsearchable wisdom, awful justice, &c. *Rom.* iii. 21, 26. It is contemning the *authority* of God, who commands us to *believe in the name of the* Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be saved, 1 *John* iii. 23. It is denying the *truth* of God, in *not believing the record* which he hath given us of eternal life in his Son, 1 *John* v. 10, 11. It is trampling upon the *unsearchable riches* of the Redeemer's love and goodness in his great undertaking; and setting up our own *perverse wills* and *foolish conceits* in opposition to the counsel of God.

Let every one be persuaded, therefore, (as they value their present comfort and everlasting happiness) to seek for salvation and holiness in

this way of *faith* and *self denial;* receiving them as the *free gift* of GOD in Christ Jesus. By faith laying hold on the infinite grace, mercy and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to *justify* and *sanctify* them. Which hath this excellent property, that it is a *sure*, and effectually *powerful*, *easy*, and *comfortable* way to all holiness and happiness; being prescribed by the unsearchable wisdom and goodness of GOD himself. All other ways being weak and insufficient; strengthening rather than subduing *sin*, and ending in *despair*. *And thus doing you will be blessed for ever.* Amen.

THE END.

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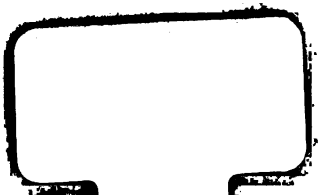
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